DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 312 TM 014 111

AUTHOR Alexander, William M.; McEwin, C. Kenneth
TITLE Earmarks of Schools in the Middle: A Research Report.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 56p.
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Improvement; *Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; *Institutional Characteristics; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; Mail Surveys; *Middle Schools; National Surveys; *School Organization; School Surveys; Trend Analysis

ABSTRACT

Characteristics of middle schools are analyzed, based on data from surveys in 1968 and 1988. In 1968, W. M. Alexander undertook a survey to provide benchmark data about middle schools with information from 110 schools. This study was replicated in 1988 with data received from 56% of the 10,857 schools approached. Comparison of these data confirmed the movement toward a 3-level school organization, with grades 6 through 8 the most popular middle school composition. The total number of grade 7 through 9 units (junior high schools) was 2,191 in 1986-87, a drop of 53% since 1970-71; and the total number of grade 6 through 8 units (middle schools) was 4,329, an increase of 160% since 1970-71. Middle schools continued to be relatively small but made more efforts toward better connection with the elementary and high schools in 1988. In all, 15 indicators of progress were identified and 8 indicators of lack of progress were found for the 20-year period. Study of middle schools in both survey years resulted in the conclusion that a middle school should exhibit the following characteristics: (1) an interdisciplinary organization with a flexibly scheduled day; (2) an adequate guidance program, with a teacher advisory plan; (3) a full-scale exploratory program; (4) curriculum provision for such broad goals and curriculum domains as personal development, continued learning skills, and basic knowledge areas; (5) effective and varied instructional methodology for the student age group; and (6) continued orientation and articulation for students, parents, and teachers. The middle school is moving toward becoming a full partner in education, but much remains to be done to ensure that all schools have the features they should have. Fifty-four data tables and the 1987 survey questionnaire are included. (SLD)

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Earmarks of Schools in the Middle: A Research Report

by
William M. Alexander
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Earmarks of Schools in the Middle: A Research Report

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I
Introduction: The Surveys

One of the major phenomena in education during the twentieth century, especially its last half, is the increasing number of schools in the middle—schools variously introduced or renamed as "middle schools," "junior high schools," "intermediate schools," "upper elementary schools," or just plain "schools." These are the schools which embrace grades falling between those included in the feeder elementary schools and the school beyond, the high or secondary school. The junior high came in 1909-10 with the first two by that name being established in that school year. The grades 7-9 junior high had become very popular by 1960, when approximately four out of every five high school graduates had gone through an elementary-junior-senior high school organization (6-3-3). By this time, however, various local dissatisfactions with this form of three-level organization had produced other variants, and there was a rapid spread in the 1960's and thereafter of "middle schools," usually consisting of grades 6-8 or 5-8.

The first-named author of this report had become very interested in the latter organization before 1963, when he proposed at the Cornell University Junior High School Conference, Summer, 1963, (Alexander, 1964) particular characteristics (or earmarks) needed in such a transitional unit. In 1967 he secured from the U.S. Office of Education a Cooperative Research grant to support a survey of such reorganized middle schools. The purpose of this study was stated as follows in the "Summary" of its research report (Alexander, 1968):

> This project was undertaken to provide bench-mark data regarding the current status of middle schools in the United States. Recent partial surveys and other data have indicated substantial interest in the reorganization of the now traditional school ladder arrangement of elementary-junior-senior high school (6-3-3). There has been lacking, however, any comprehensive data as to the number and location of reorganized middle schools replacing the grade 7-9 junior high, and as to the organizational characteristics of the new schools in the middle of the school ladder.

For the purposes of the 1968 survey the middle school was defined as "a school which combines into one organization and facility certain school years (usually grades 5-8 or 6-8) which have in the past usually been separated in elementary and secondary schools under such plans as the 6-3-3, 6-2-4, and 6-6." Through correspondence and telephone calls with state departments of education, state directories and special lists of middle school units were secured, and use of these with other follow-up communications identified 1,101 schools meeting the above definition. A ten (10) percent random sample of these, stratified by U.S. Office of Education regions, was sought and secured. The final data were obtained and reported from 110 schools. The report (Alexander, 1968) of this study has been widely cited, with at least two replications of some of its aspects made by others (Brooks and Edwards, 1978; Valentine, Clark, Nickerson, and Keefe, 1981).

The same Alexander and his present collaborator, McEwin, have been closely associated with middle school development at Appalachian State University and elsewhere during most of the intervening years. We are, of course, well aware of the burgeoning number of the new middle schools and their overtaking and surpassing of the older junior high organization in terms of numbers. For example, the latest data we have (Table 1) show that the total number of the 7-9 units (junior high schools) was 2,191 in 1986-87, a drop of 53 percent since 1970-71, and that of grade 6-8 units (middle schools) was 4,329, an increase of 160 percent since 1970-71. We have become increasingly aware, too, that there is great variation in the extent to which the new units correspond to the models we and others have described (see Alexander, 1964, 1987; Eichhorn, 1966; Lipsitz, 1984; National Middle School Association, 1982). Also we have noted few, if any, differences between some schools having different grade organizations, and wonder how different they really are. Therefore we decided in 1987 to replicate the 1967-68 study, including in the new survey other questions that would help identify likenesses and differences between characteristic features (earmarks) of middle level schools of 20 years ago and today, and between schools of different grade organizations today. Hereafter we shall refer to these two surveys, 20 years apart, as the 1968 and 1988 surveys. In both cases the survey forms were mailed in

the fall (1967, 1987) and the data collected over a period of months (1967-68, 1987-88) and compiled and reported in the respective years, 1968 and 1988.

The sample for the 1988 survey included the following: (1) middle schools as defined in the original (1968) Alexander one (schools having at least three grades and not more than five and including grades six and seven); (2) schools with grades 7-8 only; and, (3) schools with grades 7-9 only. The latter two grade organizations were included in the present study because of the large number of such schools with these grade organizations (see Table 1) and to make possible the comparison of middle level schools of different grade organizations.

A total of 10,857 schools was identified. Information for the sample was obtained from Curriculum Information Center School Directories. Stratified random samples were selected from the directories for the grade organizations identified above. Survey forms were mailed to 11 percent of each of the grade organizations samples. Six hundred seventy (670) surveys were returned (56 percent–see Table 2 for details). Data were received from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS OF VARIOUS GRADE ORGANIZATIONS, WITH PERCENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE, 1970-71 TO 1986-87

Grade Organization	Number of Schools		Percent of Increase/Decrease
	1970-71	1986-87	
Grades 5-8	772	1,137	+ 47
6-8	1,662	4,329	+ 160
7-8	2,450	2,627	+ 7
7-9	4,711	2,191	- 53
Others*	850	573	- 33
TOTALS	10,395	10,857	+ 4

Source: Data for 1970-71 from *The Condition of Education: A Statistical Report*, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1984. Data for 1986-87 compiled from *Curriculum Information Center School Directories*, Market Data Retrieval, Inc., 1986.

* 5th or higher, with the highest grade 7th to 9th.

The number of survey forms (1,200) mailed out in 1987 to slightly more than a 10 percent sample was larger than the total number (1,101) of middle schools as identified for the earlier study! The rate of response was higher in the first one (121 of 145 returned for an 83 percent return) as compared with a return of 670 or 56 percent in 1988. We suspect that the relative novelty in 1967-68 of the middle school unit and surveys thereof helped account for the greater rate of return then. We and our statistical consultants believe that both the sizes of the random samples and the rates of return support the acceptability of our findings regarding the questions asked in the two surveys.

The much larger number of schools included in 1988 permitted a breakdown of the data by the various grade organizations, and we believed it very important to determine what, if any, relationships seem to exist between various school characteristics and grade organization. Table 2 shows the number of schools of the various grade organizations to which the forms were mailed and the number and percent returned; the differences in the return rates are interesting but considered too small to affect the acceptability of the findings.

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND FORMS MAILED AND RETURNED, AND PERCENTS RETURNED, BY GRADE ORGANIZATION (1988)

Grade Organization	Number of Schools	Number of Forms Mailed	Number of Forms Returned	Percent Returned
5 - 8	1,137	123	81	66
6 - 8	4,329	482	292	61
7 - 8	2,627	292	151	52
7 - 9	2,191	243	107	44
Other	573	60	39	65
TOTAL	10,857	1,200	670	56

II
Middle School Earmarks in 1968 and 1988

This section is devoted to comparable findings of the two surveys on various school earmarks or characteristics. A few questions were included on only one of the surveys, but the grade organizations differed. As explained earlier, the 1968 survey did not include grades 7-8 and grades 7-9 units; hence, this section compares only the data from both surveys for schools having grades 5-8 and 6-8 units plus an "Other" category that excludes, in accordance with the 1968 survey, schools having less than three or more than five grades and schools not including grades 6 and 7. In most instances our comparison here is of the total number of these schools included without reference to whether grades 6-8 or 5-8 or "Other" as defined; the next major section examines the data with particular reference to grade organization. Here in this section then are the schools today usually referred to as "middle schools;" we group them later with the junior highs (7-9) and two-grade (7-8) units as the "middle level schools" referred to elsewhere in the report.

Grades 5-8 and 6-8 Organizations

As shown below, the relative percent of all grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools (and "others" having 3 to 5 grades, including grades 6 and 7) in the samples remained fairly close from 1968 to 1988:

	1968	1988
Grades 5 - 8	27%	20%
Grades 6 - 8	60%	71%
Others	13%	10%

A relevant comparison here is that of the 1970-71 and 1986-87 data cited earlier (Table 1) showing an increase of 47 percent in the number of grades 5-8 schools and of 160 percent in grades 6-8 schools during these years. Obviously, the schools most frequently classified as middle schools are increasingly grades 6-8 ones, but the number of 5-8 ones keeps growing, although at a slower pace.

Enrollments

Table 3 shows that grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools continued to be relatively small from 1968 to 1988, with only 8 percent having enrollments over 1,000 in both years. Fifty-seven percent had enrollments of 600 or less in 1968, with a still larger (sixty-five) percent having this enrollment in 1988. Only 4 percent of the schools had enrollments above 1,200 in 1968 and 3 percent in 1988. The interest of many educators and citizens in maintaining relatively small schools for children of the middle school years has been respected as the number of middle schools has multiplied.

TABLE 3
NUMBER AND PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS WITH CERTAIN ENROLLMENTS, 1968 AND 1988

Range of Enrollment	Number		Percent	
	1968	1988	1968	1988
1 - 100	1	2	1	1
101 - 200	11	16	10	4
201 - 300	10	55	9	14
301 - 400	19	59	18	15
401 - 500	7	54	7	14
501 - 600	13	68	12	17
601 - 700	19	42	18	11
701 - 800	9	39	9	10
801 - 900	3	19	3	5
901 -1000	6	11	6	3
1001 -1100	2	9	2	2
1101 -1200	2	10	2	3
1201 -1300	1	6	1	2
Above 1300	3	4	3	1
TOTALS	106	394	99	102

Housing Arrangements

As shown in Table 4, the relative frequencies of each housing arrangement for the middle school were almost identical in 1968 and 1988. The arrangement for about four out of five of these schools has been a separate plant. Expediency—that is, available space—

has probably caused the use of most other arrangements. The innovative "little school" arrangement, more popular in larger high schools having separate space and other identity for groups of 300-500, has not been utilized and indeed has probably not been necessary, in middle schools. The use of teams of smaller size has been believed desirable by many educators and attained in many schools, to help deal with the problems of the large school population. Some write-ins indicate ways the team concept is implemented; for example, "school divided into four teams geographically."

TABLE 4
NUMBER AND PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS HAVING CERTAIN HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS, 1968 AND 1988

Type of Arrangement	Number		Percent	
	1968	1988	1968	1988
One Plant (all grades)	88	354	80	77
School Within A School Each a Separate Area	7	37	6	8
Certain Grades in Separate Buildings on Same Campus	8	36	7	8
Some Students Housed on Another Campus	2	11	2	2
Housed in a Plant With Lower and/or Higher Grades	5	24	5	5
TOTALS	110	462	100	100

Means of Articulation

Because of its unique function as the bridging school in education below the college level, the middle level school must be especially concerned with identifying and employing the best means possible to articulate (that is, join, unite, connect) the schools that precede and follow. The 1967-68 survey noted that group planning activities, intervisitation, and sharing of data about students and programs were widely employed for articulation purposes. As Table 5 reveals, two-thirds or more of the middle schools reported in both surveys the use of joint workshops and joint curriculum planning activities with teachers of lower and higher grades, and of sharing data about students from level to level. We consider it encouraging that perceptible increases had occurred from 1968 to 1988 in the provision of student visitation to the next level for orientation purposes, in the provision of middle school program information to the schools below and above, and in the middle school students' enrollment in advanced courses at the high school. Actually, in only one particular, a surprising and disappointing one the authors cannot explain, is the percent lower in 1988—"obtaining or providing data *re* students entering or leaving your schools." Still the drop was from only 90 to 78 percent.

Many additional means of articulation were reported from individual schools in the "Other" blank; for example, we find these especially interesting: "6th

TABLE 5
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS USING CERTAIN MEANS OF ARTICULATION IN 1968 AND 1988

Means of Articulation	Percent	
	1968	1988
Joint Workshops With Teachers in Lower and Higher Grades	67	70
Joint Curriculum Planning Activities With Teachers of Higer and/or Lower Grades	74	66
Middle School Teacher Visitation of Elementary and/or High Schools	40	40
Sharing Faculty with Elementary and/or High Schools	35	44
Giving Program Information to Elementary and/or High Schools	62	76
Obtaining or Providing Data *re* Students Entering or Leaving Your School	90	78
Student Visitation of the High School(s) for Orientation	54	73
Visitation of Your School by Students from Feeder Schools	52	66
Middle School Student's Visits to Feeder Schools to Acquaint Elementary Students with your Program and Facilities	15	38
Visitation of Your School by High School Representatives for the Purpose of Orientation	57	72
Middle School Students Taking Advanced Course Work in the High School	13	31

grade orientation program in August for students and parents;" "on-going 'get-acquainted' program with 5th grades and high school;" "orientation evenings for parents;" "6th grade students one day early for orientation;" "concurrent lunch periods for teachers;" "administration cluster meetings involving feeder schools."

Date of Establishment of Middle Schools

Table 6 shows the great acceleration in the establishment of middle schools as defined after 1962. Of our sample of 402 schools reporting in 1988, 94 percent had been established since 1962 and 68 percent after 1971, that is in the past 15 years. Only 4 of the 1968 grade organizations and 11 of the 1988 ones we are considering at this point had been in existence before 1955, with 70 percent of those reporting in 1968 established during the five years before that survey. These data simply confirm the fact that there has been a large-scale movement toward the most common middle school grade organization (5-8 and, especially, 6-8) during the past 25 years. Also, they support our sample as representative of the more complete facts of this movement cited elsewhere (Alexander, 1987).

Reasons for Establishment

The respondents' indications of reasons for establishment of their schools (Table 7) tended to be similar in 1968 and 1988, but several rankings by percents are interesting. "To eliminate crowded conditions" was the most frequent reason checked in 1968, but had become third place in 1988. The reason middle school educators would want to predominate, "to provide a program specifically designed for children in this age group," was number one in 1988, but second to the expedient one just cited in 1968. In 1968 the argument that grades 5 and 6 students would be provided more specialization was higher ranked (fourth place) than in 1988 (eighth place). "Moving grade 9 into high school," "bridging the elementary and high school," "remedying weaknesses of the junior high school," "utilizing a new building," "trying out innovations" advanced one rank from 1968 to 1988; and "aiding desegregation" and "using plans successful elsewhere" declined one rank. Two options included in 1988 only were not very popular—remedying weaknesses of the two-level

TABLE 6
DATES MIDDLE SCHOOLS WERE ESTABLISHED, AS REPORTED IN 1968 AND 1988

Years	Number Reporting		Percent Reporting	
	1968	1988	1968	1988
Before 1955	4	11	4	3
1956 - 1962	27	12	26	3
1963 - 1971	74*	105	70*	26
1972 - 1979	—	148	—	37
1980 - 1987	—	126	—	31
TOTAL	105	402	100	100

* 1963-67

TABLE 7
PERCENTS AND RANK OF REASONS REPORTED, 1968 AND 1988, FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Reasons	Percent		Rank (Percent)	
	1968	1988	1968	1988
Remedy Weaknesses of Two-Level Organization	—	17	—	7
Move Grade 9 into High School	2	29	5	4
More Specialization in Grades 5-6	30	16	4	8
Bridge Elementary/ High School	40	51	3	2
Remedy Weaknesses of Jr. High School	25	29	5	4
Aid Desegregation	6	7	9	10
Eliminate Crowded Conditions	58	50	1	3
Provide Program Designed for Age Group	45	65	2	1
Utilize New Building	21	18	7	6
Try Out Innovations	24	21	6	5
Use Plans Successful Elsewhere	13	14	8	9
Use Older Building When Senior High Built	—	16	—	8

organization (7) and using an older building when a new senior high was built (8).

In general, we consider the responses on this question as indicative of a very positive objective of the middle school movement—toward establishment of the new organization for better serving the middle school age group rather than simply adapting the most expedient solution to other problems not directly related to the middle school program. Yet we cannot ignore the fact that many middle schools today owe their beginnings to reasons of expediency; such scattered reasons as these continued to be given in the "Other" category of question Number 5 (reasons) in the 1988 survey: "Low enrollment at elementary level—closed two elementary schools;" "financial trouble—consolidation K-8 resulted in 5-8;" "consolidation due to declining enrollment;" "to justify closing of an elementary building;" "to eliminate overcrowding in elementary and high school;" "economical."

Persons Involved in Grade Organization Decision

The differences in the percents of schools reported (Table 8) in 1968 and 1988 as having involved certain persons (and groups) in deciding on the grade organization (that is, in setting up the newer middle school types) are in general so small as to indicate no change in this 20-year period. In both the earlier and later periods the system-wide and individual school administrators were checked much more frequently than any other groups except teachers, who ranked second. The largest difference in the percents for any group was that for "parents" (from 22 to 40 percent, 1968 to 1988), and therefore some would conclude that participation by the community is increasing although more slowly than many educators would prefer.

TABLE 8
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS INVOLVING CERTAIN PERSONS IN DETERMINING GRADE ORGANIZATION

Person	Percent	
	1968	1988
Principal(s)	69	71
Teachers	46	50
System-level Administration	78	88
Accreditation Bodies	3	2
State Department of Education	11	3
Outside Agency	6	2
Parents	22	40

The specific influence of the board of education was noted in 13 of the 110 middle schools in the 1968 survey, but this item was omitted from the 1988 form in the belief that "system-level administration" included the school board. Nevertheless, the open-ended "Other" blank drew from the 1988 respondents frequent mention of the school board, and also such other lay groups as "board-appointed citizens committee," "school committee," "district accountability committee," and "school improvement council." Although most of the write-ins indicated the involvement of these and other groups, from one community came this report of the almost overnight reorganization that has also occurred over the 20 years: "None (involvement)—the decision was made in April to establish a middle school in September."

Preparatory Activities for Opening the Reorganized/New Middle Schools

Opening the new middle school, whether an old or new building with a new grade organization, has involved a variety of activities listed in Table 9. The relative frequency of some means of preparation as reported in the 1968 and 1988 surveys varied very little, but there were also significant differences. The percent of schools having provided for a year or more of faculty study and planning in the district more than doubled from 1968 to 1988. The percent of schools being represented in a funded middle level planning project jumped from 2 to 16 percent, and there were similar increases in pre-school faculty workshops (5 to 27 percent) and school visitation (38 to 72 percent).

In both surveys "occasional planning sessions of prospective middle school faculty members" was the most common activity, being reported by slightly more than half of the respondents, with "visitation of schools having similar plans" second most frequent each year, and inservice meetings with consultants the third. Several other interesting possibilities were reported in the open-ended blank: "hiring of the new middle school principal a full year in advance for planning/

preparatory tasks (reported by two schools);" "year of study by administration and board of education with faculty input;" "school is gradually instituting middle school reforms over a period of 5 years with faculty involved in implementing the program;" "2 years of intensive faculty preparation;" "district-wide committees K-12—academic, exploratory, staff development, facilities, policies and procedures, student activities, student needs."

Required Subjects for All Students

The data as to subjects required for all students throughout the grades included were collected in different form in 1968 and 1988. The situation for the latter years is shown in Table 10: all but physical education of these almost universally required subjects through grade 8 and even longer were taken by all students all year in almost all of the 1988 survey schools. In 1968 the data were collected for each grade; this did not seem necessary in 1988. However, the 1968 survey showed the same, essentially: All four of the basic subjects were required 100 percent of the time, with only slight deviations, in each grade (5-8), with physical education required in more than 95 percent of the schools, a few requiring this only one semester. Thus, the practice of requiring only alternate days or semesters or other such plans in physical education did make this subject less universal than any other of these in both 1968 and 1988.

Subjects Offered For Interest Exploration and Development Purposes

The grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools continued the exploratory programs of grades 7-9 junior high schools, usually offering certain exploratory subjects on a short-term, frequently rotating basis. In many cases, however, art and music and a few other subjects in some schools were required for a full year. The data for the 1968 report were collected by grade, and indicated quite diverse practice, both as to grades in which offered, length of the offering, and as to required/elective status. Whether or not an offering is required or elective depends frequently, of course, on whether alternatives are available. We recognize three types of curriculum opportunities for exploring and developing interests and related skills in the middle grades. First are the courses introduced in the junior high schools and retained in the reorganized middle schools that were believed to be especially appropriate for both their general education and interest development potentials: art, music, industrial arts, and home economics (or homemaking). Added to these early in the development of special schools for the middle level were

TABLE 9
NUMBER AND PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS USING CERTAIN PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO ORIGINAL OPENING

Activity	Percent		Percent	
	1968	1988	1968	1988
Year or More Faculty Study and Planning in the District	27	162	25	53
Year or More of Study by Faculty Representatives at University	2	19	2	6
Representation in a Middle Level Planning Project, Specially Funded	2	50	2	16
Summer Faculty Workshop Prior to School Opening	5	82	5	27
Occasional Planning Sessions of Prospective School Faculty Members	57	195	52	63
Visitation of Schools with Similar Plans in Operation	42	224	38	72
Inservice Meetings of Prospective Faculty Members with Consultants	28	178	26	58

TABLE 10
NUMBER AND PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS REPORTNG CERTAIN SUBJECTS TAKEN ALL YEAR BY All STUDENTS, 1988

Subjects	Number	Percent
Language Arts	408	99
Mathematics	411	100
Physical Education	347	85
Science	392	95
Social Studies	397	96

introductory foreign languages for interested students and special reading classes for those needing them. We have classified these subjects as "traditional exploratory" ones, and devoted Table 11 to data about them.

As middle schools have attempted to focus on their students' curriculum needs, many other types of curriculum organizations—variously called "subjects," "activities," "clubs," "special interest activites"—have developed. We have grouped all these into two categories, "newer exploratory subjects" (Table 12) and "other curriculum opportunities" (Table 13).

Although the 1968 survey yielded data from grades 5-8, plus some write-ins for other grades, and the 1988 one data for grades 5-9, plus some write-ins, too, we believe the comparison of the provision of the various curriculum opportunities is best made from our data for the grades most common in the reorganized middle schools in 1968 and 1988—grades 6, 7, and 8. Our interest here is primarily in what major changes have occurred in the curriculum provided from 1968 to 1988 in middle schools. A later section deals with comparison of various features, including curriculum opportunities, of schools having different grade organizations.

TABLE 11
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS OFFERING CERTAIN TRADITIONAL EXPLORATORY SUBJECTS AS REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE IN GRADES 6, 7, AND 8, 1968 AND 1988

Subject	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
	Percent		Percent		Percent	
	1968	1988	1968	1988	1968	1988
Art						
Required	74	64	65	50	50	39
Elective	20	17	30	36	40	46
Foreign Language						
Required	32	6	29	9	33	8
Elective	11	10	22	25	29	38
Home Economics						
Required	20	32	43	37	48	31
Elective	9	6	19	30	27	44
Industrial Arts						
Required	18	33	41	38	46	31
Elective	10	9	17	29	25	45
Music						
Required	86	53	67	36	59	25
Elective	34	14	48	18	56	20
Reading						
Required	23	84	25	70	23	60
Elective	17	1	17	5	18	10

Traditional exploratory subjects. Table 11 shows the number and percent of middle schools by grades offering certain exploratory subjucts now classified as "traditional" in 1968 and 1988. We consider the following facts of particular interest regarding curriculum change of the past 20 years in this area:

1. Only one subject has become less widely required without corresponding increase as elective subjects—foreign language. This change does not reflect very well the middle school aim of increased curriculum options for individual interest—note that the total provision of foreign languages lost ground in each grade.

2. These subjects became less widely required with a corresponding increase in the number of schools reporting an increase as elective: home economics, grade 8; industrial arts, grade 8. This indication of increased electives does reflect the individualization aim.

3. (General) music became less widely required and also less widely elective in grades 6, 7, and 8, but the percent of schools offering instrumental music (band, orchestra) increased sharply in grades 7 and 8 in 1968 and in all grades from 1968 to 1988. The wider offering in music areas is encouraging.

4. These subjects became more widely required without a corresponding decrease in their elective offering: home economics, grade 6; industrial arts, grade 7; reading, grade 6, 7 and 8 (some loss in elective offering, but much greater gain in required). The increased provision of reading instruction reflects the national interest in improving students' learning skills at this very critical age.

5. The reasons and methods for making these subjects required or elective are so diverse as to prevent generalization on the changes in this regard. As noted above, some changes were toward increasing individual options, others not. Middle school education's general objective of helping early adolescents develop worth-

while continuing interests and skills does require wise selection of as many exploratories as possible.

Certain newer exploratory subjects. New exploratory subjects not included above were added to the curriculum of middle schools even before 1968 and since then. A few on which data were gathered in the earlier survey and several not included then are reported upon in Table 12. Except for agriculture, the subjects included in the 1988 survey and not in the 1968 one reflect major shifts in social and educational developments in this 20 years. Our recollection is that agriculture instruction was usually limited to the high school in 1968 (only one school mentioned it then under "Other" as a required subject, and one as an elective); with the widening of electives in grades 6-8 under the middle school organization, agriculture units were added in more schools, but still only 10 percent provided these at the most popular grade (8) in the 1988 sample. Careers, computers, health, and sex education reflect almost dramatically the pressure on schools to offer education meeting social needs and problems. Thus work in an appropriate career is our hope for every citizen. Therefore, with the ever widening scope of possible careers for both men and women our guidance-interested citizens and educators have pressed for early exposure of children to the work world and careers, especially as they approach choices of specialized preparatory courses in high schools. Hence a variety of required and elective, usually short-term, courses in careers in general (plus specific career-related ones) have been introduced in the middle grades, although still provided in grade 8 of only about a fourth of the schools. The recent recognition of the possibilities of computer usage in learning, work, and even recreation has brought computer instruction to a very widespread status, with a total of 50 percent or more of the schools offering it as a required (outnumbering the elective) and elective subject in one or more of grades 6-8. Separate health courses were reported by several schools in 1968 and were so common in 1988 as to be included on our form; increased concern for the healthy development of the young adolescent is reflected in the requirement of it in over half of the schools in grades 6, 7 and 8. Sex education as a subject, mentioned by only two schools in 1968, has become required in about one-fourth of the schools, elective in a few more, as developments of the past 20 years pressed the schools to participate in sex education, especially in the middle school years as girls and boys experience

TABLE 12
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS OFFERING CERTAIN NEWER EXPLORATORY SUBJECTS AS REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE IN GRADES 6, 7, AND 8, 1968 AND 1988

Subject	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
	Percent		Percent		Percent	
	1968	1988	1968	1988	1968	1988
Agriculture						
Required	—	1	—	1	—	1
Elective	—	5	—	7	—	10
Careers						
Required	—	6	—	11	—	13
Elective	—	5	—	7	—	10
Computers						
Required	—	40	—	40	—	38
Elective	—	10	—	19	—	25
Creative Writing						
Required	—	24	—	26	—	27
Elective	2	3	6	7	9	7
Dramatics						
Required	7	—	16	—	21	—
Elective	10	—	15	—	18	—
Health						
Required	—	62	—	62	—	59
Elective	—	1	—	3	—	4
Journalism						
Required	—	1	—	1	—	1
Elective	2	4	7	11	11	16
Sex Education						
Required	—	24	—	28	—	28
Elective	—	4	—	5	—	5
Speech						
Required	1	5	7	6	14	6
Elective	9	4	15	8	18	11
Typing						
Required	—	6	—	4	—	5
Elective	4	4	7	9	10	13

puberty and related problems. Many schools, of course, have long provided some sex education in subjects bearing other names, especially health and home economics ones, for example—and many continue to do so.

Dramatics was included in the 1968 survey and not the 1988 one because by the latter date it had more usually become classified differently; for example, many schools added "Dramatics Clubs" as one of their "Others" added to the "Other Curriculum Opportunities" (Item 10) list. As to subjects included in both the 1968 and 1988 surveys in this list, the following summary statements are offered:

1. Creative writing, reported as an elective by few schools in 1968, was required in each of grades 6, 7 and 8 by about one fourth of the schools in 1988. We interpret this as an effort by these schools to widen the language arts program to include special instruction in writing.

2. Journalism was available only as an elective in a very few schools in 1968, by very few as a required subject in 1988 and by more but not a large number as an elective then; as we shall note in the next section, publications had become a very popular activity by 1988.

3. Speech has been of minor frequency both as a required and elective subject in 1968 and 1988, and would seem more appropriate for older students.

4. Typing, mentioned (as an "Others") by only 2 schools in 1968, continues to be deferred until the high school in most districts, although it had some growth in offering between 1968 and 1988.

We should note, too that many additional newer (to the middle schools) subjects were listed by the respondents in the "Others" blank of question 9 ("Exploratories, Electives, Etc.") on the 1988 form. Each of the following interesting ones was listed on the 1988 survey forms (grades 5-8 and 6-8) usually by only one school, with the grade, if any, as indicated, and as required (R) or elective (E) if indicated:

Aids Education, 6-8 (R)
Algebra
Ancient Civilization, 7, 8 (E)
Archaeology, 7 (E)
Business Education, 7-8 (E)
Drafting, 7-8 (E)
Drama, Dance, 7-8 (E)
Ecology, 7 (E)
Drugs and Alcohol, 6-8 (R)
First Aid/Survival, 7-8 (E)
French
General Construction, 8 (E)
Geography, 7-8 (E)
Health Occupations
Horticulture, 7-8 (E)
Library, 5-8 (R)
Life Skills
Media, 5-6 (R)
Oceanography 7-8 (E)
Power Mechanics
Pre-Algebra
Study Skills (various)
Technology
Theater Arts, 6-8 (E)
Thinking Skills, 7-8 (R)
Video Communication

Other curriculum opportunities (activities). Table 13 provides information as to the number and percents of schools offering certain other curriculum oportunities in grades 6, 7 and 8, in 1968 and 1988. In general these are "activities" rather than classes involving tests and grades, and are available to students on an elective basis. Certain ones–"Honor Societies" and "Student Council," notably–and also others such as "Photography" and "Publications" may have invited or elected membership. These activities greatly enrich the curriculum of many middle graders, and most of them deserve wider offering. The following comments summarize our observations:

1. Growth from 1968 to 1988 in the percent of schools offering the following activities is highly consistent with the goal of increased attention to the exploration and development of worthwhile interests of middle schoolers: Arts and Crafts, grades 6, 7 and 8; Intramural Sports, both girls and boys, each grade; Photography, each grade, too, although with much smaller gain than the preceding ones; Publications, each grade; Social Parties, each grade; Social Dancing, each grade.

2. A substantial increase in the percent of schools providing Honor Society possibilities from 1968 to 1988 indicates middle school interest in recognizing student achievement. We consider this incentive another important interest developer.

3. The increases in the percents of schools providing Interschool Sports for both boys and girls do not reflect the judgment of many authorities on middle

school education as to the appropriateness of such competition for preadolescents and early adolescents (Toepfer, 1982; McEwin, 1981; Redfern, 1981). Especially large increases occurred in Interschool Sports for girls, perhaps due to nondiscriminatory pressures: grade 6, 1 to 28; grade 7, 19 to 74; grade 8, 23 to 78.

TABLE 13
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS OFFERING CERTAIN OTHER CURRICULUM OPPORTUNITIES (ACTIVITIES) IN GRADES 6, 7, AND 8, 1968 AND 1988

Curriculum Opportunity	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
	Percent		Percent		Percent	
	1968	1988	1968	1988	1968	1988
Arts and Crafts	7	36	19	37	22	38
Honor Societies	2	20	5	36	6	39
Intramural Sports (Boys)	8	68	20	68	19	66
Intramural Sports (Girls)	7	67	22	65	21	64
Interschool Sports (Boys)	4	29	48	74	52	79
Interschool Sports (Girls)	1	28	19	74	23	78
Photography	4	10	8	15	9	20
Publications	4	36	18	49	25	58
School Parties	24	59	30	58	32	60
Social Dancing	5	47	31	65	37	70
Student Council (Government)	3	80	12	86	14	88

4. The greatly increased percent of schools providing a Student Council plan in 1988 may be partially explained by the fact that the 1968 survey form asked about provision of "Student Government" and the 1988 one about "Student Council." In any event, it is very significant, we believe, that 80, 86 and 88 percent, respectively, of the 1987-88 schools provided Student Council plans for students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

The 1988 survey also yielded many additional "Curriculum Opportunities" from respondents who supplied them in the "Others" blank of Question 10 on the survey form. Indicating the wide variety of interest development sought and the creativity of the planners, is the following selection of titles of the elective activities, minicourses, etc:

Arrive Alive Club	Knowledge Board
Bookworms	Leather Crafts
Builders Club	Olympics of the Mind
Cheerleaders	Outdoor Education
Chess Club	Pep Squad
Citizens in Action	Scholastic Bowl Team
Foreign Language Club	Self-Esteem Group
Future Job Salary	Ski Club
History Bowl	Speech/Debate Club
Junior Great Books	Stamp/Coin Collectors
"Just Say No"	Sustained Silent Reading

Plans of Instructional Organization

The considerable increase occurring in the percent of schools utilizing the interdisciplinary team organization at every grade, 5-8, from 1968 to 1988 is regarded as evidence of the effort these schools were making to attain one of the major features widely espoused for middle school. Continuation of the elementary school model, the self-contained classroom, above grade 4 or 5, and adoption of the high school one, departmentalization, before grade 9 were undesirable features of the two-level organization. These are the plans schools have turned away from in the currently predominant elementary-middle-high school, three-level organization.

Note these other particulars revealed by Table 14:

1. As expected, nearly all schools reporting the inclusion of any subject in a team organization reported all four of the basic subjects (language arts, math, science, and social studies) we named as being so included. In 1988 many schools indicated slight variations of the four-subject teaming, including adding reading at lower grades as a fifth subject (and fifth teacher), and exclusion of math and science, and several others, but the basic four-subject plan has clearly prevailed.

2. Use of the departmental plan in 1968 increased in grade 6 over grade 5, and markedly so in grade 7 over grade 6, with little change from grade 7 to 8; the pattern in 1988 was similar although there was slightly more increase from grade 7 to 8.

3. The increase in interdisciplinary organization from 1968 to 1988 was accounted for in considerable

part by a drop in the use of the self-contained classroom (all subjects taught by the same teacher) during this period, especially in grades 5 and 6, there being little use made of this elementary school model in grades 7 and 8 either year, although slightly more in 1988.

Criteria for Grouping Students

Both the 1968 and 1988 surveys inquired as to the use in each grade of several criteria for grouping students in instructional and advisory groups, and the data collected are shown in Tables 15-17. Unfortunately for later comparative purposes, the 1968 survey did not obtain the data so specifically by grade for its sample as seemed desirable for the much larger number of schools in the 1988 sample. Unfortunately also, the 1968 survey failed to secure the number of schools using random assignment, the most popular plan (except in basic subject groupings) in 1988. Nevertheless, some interesting findings can be noted:

1. The fact that only 8 (or 7 percent) of the schools in 1968 reported no criteria used suggests that not more than this did use random assignments in 1968. The respondents in 1988 checked more than one response, but still the percent checking random assignments in 1988 for all three groupings (basic subjects, electives, advisory programs) suggests to us that the use of random assignments has substantially increased.

2. As to the selective criteria of groupings, previous academic record had much less usage in 1968 than at any grade level in 1988 for basic subjects, but relatively little in both years for the other purposes. I.Q. tests were used as one criterion in about one-fourth of the schools in 1968, and in about the same percent in all grades in 1988, for the basic subjects, relatively infrequently for other purposes both years. Achievement tests were used far more widely in basic subjects at all grades in 1988 than in 1968.

3. Very properly we think, teacher recommendations were used in more than two-thirds of all the schools, all grades, in the basic subjects in 1988; only a

TABLE 14
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS UTILIZING CERTAIN PLANS FOR ORGANIZING INSTRUCTION IN BASIC SUBJECTS, GRADES 5-8, 1968 AND 1988

Subject Area	Grade	Interdisciplinary		Departmental		Self-Contained	
		1968	1988	1968	1988	1968	1988
Language Arts	5	3	33	20	26	60	38
	6	8	40	35	44	30	18
	7	6	31	74	66	1	6
	8	6	26	74	71	1	6
Math	5	3	31	33	31	50	36
	6	8	37	50	48	24	16
	7	6	27	88	71	0	5
	8	6	23	89	75	0	4
Science	5	3	30	30	26	55	39
	6	7	36	50	47	26	16
	7	5	26	87	71	0	4
	8	6	22	87	76	0	5
Social Studies	5	3	29	28	27	60	27
	6	7	37	39	46	32	17
	7	5	28	80	68	1	4
	8	6	23	76	23	2	5

TABLE 15
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS GROUPING STUDENTS IN BASIC SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO CERTAIN CRITERIA, BY SCHOOLS, 1968, AND BY GRADES, 1988

Criteria	Schools	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	1968	1988	1988	1988	1988
Intelligence Quotient	14	22	25	27	26
Achievement Test	17	59	65	67	67
Teacher Recommendations	27	68	73	76	76
Age	12	20	22	22	22
Previous Academic Records	15	56	60	63	63
Random Assignment		28	26	26	26

surprising one-fourth of the schools in 1968 had checked this plan.

4. Apparently the trend by 1988 was to give relatively more attention to academic performance and teachers' judgment than to I.Q. tests in grouping students for instruction. Age was checked fairly consistently by about 20 percent for the 1968 schools and 1988 grades, suggesting no increase in the use of chronological or automatic promotions.

5. Again very properly we think, relatively small percents of the schools in 1968 and 1988 checked the use of any criterion (other than random assignment) for grouping in electives and advisories (homerooms in 1968). Surely the selection of at least the former should be largely on the basis of students' interests.

TABLE 16
PERCENTS OF SCHOOLS GROUPING STUDENTS IN ELECTIVE SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO CERTAIN CRITERIA, BY SCHOOLS, 1968, AND BY GRADES, 1988

Criteria	Schools	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	1968	1988	1988	1988	1988
Intelligence Quotient	14	6	14	5	5
Achievement Test	17	10	9	10	11
Teacher Recommendations	27	19	21	23	25
Age	12	6	7	8	8
Previous Academic Records	15	14	13	14	16
Random Assignment		39	46	52	52

TABLE 17
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS GROUPING STUDENTS IN ADVISORY PROGRAMS ACCORDING TO CERTAIN CRITERIA, BY SCHOOLS, 1968, AND BY GRADES, 1988

Criteria	Schools	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
	1968	1988	1988	1988	1988
Intelligence Quotient	18	17	17	5	5
Achievement Test	17	10	9	10	11
Teacher Recommendations	27	19	21	23	25
Age	12	6	7	8	8
Previous Academic Records	15	14	13	14	16
Random Assignment		39	46	52	52

Scheduling for Instruction

The 1968 survey determined the following distribution of scheduling plans then in effect for the 108 middle schools reporting:

Plans	Number	Percent
Daily Periods Uniform in Length	76	70
Daily Periods of Varying Length	17	16
Some Periods Uniform, Some Varying in Length	10	9
Modular Scheduling	5	5
Totals	108	100

By 1987-88 modular scheduling (use of short periods, varying numbers for different purposes) had gone out of use at least as a term. Our survey question omitted this type, and added "self-contained classroom" to determine the status of this type of scheduling (time distributed by the teacher among the curriculum areas included) and the use of flexible scheduling within the team block of time. The response is shown in Table 18, and by grades.

Probably the major comparison to be made is that of the use of daily uniform periods in 1968 and 1988, and for the latter year between grades. Thus, in the latter year, despite 20 years of support for flexibility in scheduling, the uniform period day still persisted in grade 7 and 8 in more than four out of five middle schools, and in grade 6 in nearly two out of three schools. The percent (40) was considerably lower in grade 5, yet two out of five schools were putting their fifth graders through a high school-like schedule. Blocks of time for teams, with flexible scheduling within the block, was being used in from 20 (grade 8) to 31 percent (grade 6). Although we did not have the data

by grades in 1968, it is clear that there had been no decline in the use of the relatively inflexible uniform period day in the middle schools, 1988.

TABLE 18
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS, 1988, USING CERTAIN TYPES OF SCHEDULING FOR INSTRUCTION

Criteria	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Self-Contained Classroom	42	22	8	8
Daily Periods - Uniform	40	67	82	82
Flexible Scheduling Within Blocks for Teams	25	31	23	20
Daily Periods - Varying	19	14	11	11

However, the open-ended blank "Other" did elicit some description of innovative schedule arrangement aimed toward flexibility and adjustment for special needs. Note, for example, these summary descriptions: "Rotating modular schedule;" "Teams possible for each grade and house but not on a daily basis;" "Two-member team" (schedule); "Subject areas have varied time schedule;" "Partial self-contained (scheduled), except reading and math."

Independent Study Opportunities

Table 19 shows the number and percent of schools providing certain types of independent study opportunities by grades, in 1968 and 1988. There has been considerable growth in the percents of schools providing for some students to be released part or all of the time from classes for independent study in grades 5 and 6, with less but still some increase in grades 7 and 8; small but definite increases at each grade in arrangements for student seminars; considerable increase at each grade in individually planned programs including regularly scheduled time for independent study; and very small increases in the small percents of schools providing supervised work experience at these grade levels. We believe that this clearly perceptible recognition by middle school faculties of the potential value of independent study for the transitional population is a highly desirable development of the past 20 years. For example with one out of every four middle schools now providing for some students in grades 6, 7 and 8 to have independent study in lieu of full-time class attendance, we can hope for continuing increase of individualized curriculum opportunities in middle level.

Reports of Student Progress

Table 20 shows the almost total lack of any change from 1968 to 1988 in the frequency of middle schools' use of various types of student progress reports. This very important aspect of home-school relationships as well as of the system of educational reporting was not materially changed during the period. The great majority of schools continued to use the A-B-C, etc. letter scale, with some increase in the percent using a word scale (Excellent, Good, etc.).

Despite widespread recommendation for increased parent-teacher communication, use of the parent conference type of report declined slightly. The 1968

TABLE 19
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS PROVIDING CERTAIN TYPES OF INDEPENDENT STUDY OPPORTUNITIES, BY GRADES, IN 1968 AND 1988

Type of Independent Study Opportunity	Percent of Schools Providing							
	Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
	1968	1988	1968	1988	1968	1988	1968	1988
Some students released part or all of the time from the classes, for independent study	2	21	9	26	17	26	18	26
One or more groups of students with similar interests work as a seminar	0	7	4	11	4	13	6	14
Some students have individually planned programs with regularly scheduled time for independent study	0	17	1	20	6	20	5	22
Some students have time scheduled for work experience with faculty supervision	5	6	4	7	7	8	9	11

TABLE 20
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS USING VARIOUS TYPES OF PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTS

Types	Percent	
	1968	1988
Letter Scale	86	84
Word Scale (Excellent, Good, etc.)	6	21
Number Scale (1-5 etc.)	13	14
Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Scale	26	41
Informal Written Notes	46	62
Percentage Marks	36	29
Dual System (Progress compared with (1) class (2) student's own potential)	14	9
Parent Conference	42	68
Self Evaluation	—	5

survey did not inquire as to the use of student self-evaluation; the 1988 one did, with only 5 percent of schools reporting its use. In 1988 we also asked whether a distinction was made between the type of progress report used for academic and exploratory courses, with only 23 percent of the respondents stating that there was a distinction. Many middle school leaders have argued in vain, it seems, for using evaluation plans in the exploratory program that would not stress such comparisons of student achievement in areas highly related to creative abilities, as might discourage student election and effort.

However, much interest and effort in innovative means of evaluation and reporting student progress were shown by the many write-ins on the "Other" blank in the question concerned (No. 15), 1988 survey. For interesting examples, note these:

"Comments in an accompanying letter for each letter grade"

"Reports by phone as needed"

"Students get 'report card' each day to take home to parent"

"Mid-term progress reports;" "interim reports;"

"Reports every 3 weeks for students in danger of failing"

"Pass-Fail in exploratory classes"

"Students take report cards to teachers every 6 weeks to receive grades and written comments and personal conference"

"Progress reports every 2 weeks upon parent request"

"Progress reports every 4 1/2 weeks, inviting parents to conference"

Teacher Advisory Plans

Although the authors and others were recommending the development of home base (advisory plan utilizing teacher of each home base, or homeroom, group as an advisor, later frequently called "advisory" or "Advisor/Advisee" plan) and other advisory plans in 1967-68, these were not considered fully enough developed to be included in the 1968 survey. However, the 1968 survey did include "Home base" and "Other teachers" in the question (No. 16) about who had responsibility for counseling students. Table 21 shows the comparison of replies in 1968 and 1988. The small decline in the percent of home base teachers utilized for "counseling" is believed due to the considerable debate as to who "counsels" and who provides a teacher home base or advisory program that does include without being so called, teacher guidance. Actually little change is shown by Table 21 as to the use for counseling of the various persons included. Additionally, the 1968 survey data showed that 20 of the schools reported that principals were utilized, and eight assistant principals. The number using "Other" persons in the 1988 data is not available, but many mentions were made also of principal and assistant principal, and also school psychologist, nurse, attendance aide, social workers, adjustment counselor, "Quest" teacher, and dropout counselor. One respondent stated: "Our custodian is probably the best counselor, although she's not assigned the responsibility."

More significant, we believe, are the 1988 survey data as to the number (161 of the 377 grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools responding) and percent (39) of the schools

TABLE 21
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS UTILIZING CERTAIN PERSONS FOR COUNSELING STUDENTS, 1988

Person	Percent	
	1968	1988
Home Base Teacher	55	45
Other Teachers	45	32
Part-time Counselors	25	25
Full-time Counselors	47	78

which stated (Question 17, 1988 Survey Form) that they had advisory programs. Of these, 54 percent stated that all teachers in the school served as advisors. Table 22 shows the number and percent of schools having certain frequencies of advisory meetings per week; it is widely believed that daily meetings give best assurance of continued teacher advisor/student contact, although the length of the advisory group (or home base) period is also important. As Table 23 shows, there is great variation between schools as to the length of advisory periods, with over a third (37 percent) being 15 minutes or less. Nearly half (43 percent) have meetings of 21 minutes or longer. Although comparable data regarding the advisory plans were not collected in 1968, our observations and experience during the 20-year period, as well as several recent publications regarding advisory plans in the middle school years, are quite conclusive as to the marked growth in number and quality of these plans. This is a positive contribution of middle schools to provision of adult guidance and support at a critical time in adolescent development, a contribution that needs continued expansion, evaluation and improvement.

TABLE 22
NUMBER AND PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS HAVING CERTAIN NUMBER OF ADVISORY PERIODS PER WEEK, 1988

Number Per Week	Number	Percent
1	18	10
2	17	10
3	5	3
4	1	1
5	140	77
TOTAL	181	101

Faculty With Special Preparation for Middle School Education

Regrettably, the 1968 survey did not include specific questions on teacher preparation, although the survey report's final recommendation was as follows:

> Suspecting that a major reason for the lack of innovation in the new organizations is their transplanting of personnel from the old ones—and this explanation was frequently suggested by respondents and interviewers—a primary need is the training of personnel specifically for the new organization. Preservice and inservice education programs must be developed to provide an input of innovative programs and organizational practices, if the new organizations are to really differ from the old ones.

TABLE 23
NUMBER AND PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS HAVING ADVISORY PERIODS OF VARIOUS LENGTHS, 1988

Length in Minutes	Number	Percent
1 - 5	6	4
6 - 10	33	19
11 - 15	24	14
16 - 20	36	21
21 - 25	19	11
26 - 30	23	14
31 - 35	3	2
36 - 40	7	4
41 - 45	8	5
46 - 50	5	3
51 - 55	2	1
56 - 60	3	2
More than 60	1	1
TOTAL	170	101

Meanwhile the present authors have conducted two surveys of teacher education programs for the middle level (McEwin/Alexander, 1982 and 1987) and have become very conscious of the continuing lack of special preparation and the resultant problems of the new school units. Hence, we did include in the 1988 survey a question as to the approximate percent of the faculty of each school responding, who had "*specific* university or college preparation for *middle level* teaching." The findings confirmed our fears; note from Table 24 that 61 percent of the 394 schools responding reported that less than 25 percent of the faculty had such preparation, with only 9 percent having more than 75 percent of their faculties with specific preparation. The wonder may really be that so many middle schools have been able to develop programs as different from their predecessor units as they have!

TABLE 24
NUMBER AND PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS HAVING FACULTIES WITH VARIOUS EXTENTS OF SPECIAL MIDDLE LEVEL PREPARATION, 1988

Percent of Faculty	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Less than 25%	240	61
25 - 50%	65	16
51 - 75%	53	13
76 - 100%	36	9
TOTALS	394	99

Attitudes Toward the Middle School Organization

Respondents were asked in each survey to estimate the attitude of selected groups toward the middle school organization. Four categories were supplied in 1968: Enthusiastic, Favorable, Indifferent, Opposed. For the 1988 survey we eliminated the Enthusiastic category in the expectation that this might elicit a sharper division of opinion, but in fact Table 25 shows that the total of the percents estimated an Enthusiastic and as Favorable for the 1968 survey were almost identical to the percent estimated as Favorable for the 1988 one. Similarly, the difference in the small percent estimated as Indifferent and Opposed between 1968 and 1988 are negligible. Apparently the administrators making the reports were as biased one year as the other!—or more optimistically, the reaction to the new organization has been favorable throughout the 20 years. In general, the latter explanation is confirmed by our experience and observation, although we believe our communities have certainly varied more in these reactions than our data indicate.

TABLE 25
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS REPORTING CERTAIN ATTITUDES OF SELECTED GROUPS TOWARD THEIR ORGANIZATION, 1968 AND 1988

Group	Enthusiastic and Favorable		Favorable		Indifferent		Opposed	
	1968		1988		1968	1988	1968	1988
Students	90		92		6	8	0	0
Staff	97		95		3	4	0	1
Parents	91		94		8	6	1	0
Public	84		79		16	18	0	0

Plans for Evaluation

In view of the variety and individual nature of school evaluation plans, these were surveyed only through a final open-ended question in both surveys. The summary of the returns on this in 1968 follows:

Evaluations:

In response to the request for descriptions of plans for evaluating the middle school, numerous plans were listed, especially standardized tests, follow-up studies, accrediting evaluations, and self-study programs. Several respondents indicated need for additional evaluation plans and others that plans were in process. No respondent suggested that unfavorable evaluations had been made or that evaluations were being demanded by school critics. The greatly increased number of middle schools and of our sample in 1987-88 makes such a brief summary difficult, although the means cited above remained very common in 1988. Others of interest from the second survey include:

Annual end-of-year evaluations by parents, students, faculty

Various periodic evaluations using state-developed and/or other models

Various task forces, councils, committees of parents, teachers, administrators, others to evaluate special programs and facilities, and also total program

Parent polls

Staff polls

Student polls

Staff evaluation of administrators; *vice versa*

The generally more frequent, specific and comprehensive replies to the open-ended question on evaluation in 1988 confirm the observation that evaluation of schools has become far more common and better done in the past 20 years. It is especially essential for new organizations. The full information and many copies of materials used returned with the 1988 survey forms are reassuring as to the effort of middle schools to carry on systematic school evaluations. We should expect continuing school improvement.

Major Problems in Establishing Middle Schools

Both survey forms asked respondents to list any major problems encountered in establishing their school, and both elicited many problems. The 1968 survey gave this summary:

Problems:

Reactions may also be implied from the open-ended item returns. In response to the request for a list of major problems encountered in establishing the middle school, many items were listed but the most frequent ones were teacher adjustment, facilities, finances and excessive pupil populations. It is inferred from the absence of problem statements as to opposition and unfavorable reactions, that the chief barriers to effective middle schools were perceived as tangible ones in achieving goals rather than dissatisfaction with the goals themselves.

In addition to many mentions in 1988 of the types of problems cited above, the following somewhat different ones were typical in 1988:

Staff opposed-resistant-inflexible

Lack of special training of teachers

Middle school considered elementary

Establishing teacher advisory plan

Too little staff development

Scheduling

No middle level supervisor

Confusion between middle and junior high schools

Middle school in name, junior high in concept

Teaming

Establishing a true middle school

Insufficient money to do anything

Selling the concept

Overcoming the public's desire to have competitive athletics

Teachers subject-oriented instead of student-oriented

Quality inservice education for staff

Summary—The Middle School, 1968 to 1988

The data presented in this section comparing the new middle school organizations (primarily grades 5-8 and 6-8 in 1967-68) with the far more numerous schools of the same grade organization in 1987-88, are convincing as to the strength and rapidity of the middle school movement. The final section of this report will summarize and draw implications from the complete study of 1987-88; here we shall merely list the facts we consider most relevant to the question: What happened to the new middle school as defined in the 1968 survey report, in the following 20 years? We will note progress made toward particular earmarks of generally accepted models, and those fewer ones in which such progress was non-existent or even reversed.

Evidence of Progress. The following points summarize the evidence from our surveys of progress made by middle schools, 1968 to 1988:

1. The total number of middle schools identified as meeting the 1968 survey criteria (school including grades 6 and 7, having no less than 3 grades and no more than 5) was 1,101; in the 1988 one the total number of schools with grades 5-8 and 6-8 was 5,466, the most comparable figure, although still not including a few combinations possible under the 1968 definition. Other data cited confirm the burgeoning movement toward a three-level school organization, with the grades 6-8 becoming the most popular one. Also, data in the surveys as to their dates of establishment further confirm the large-scale movement toward middle schools in the past 25 years.

2. The middle schools have continued to be relatively small schools, with the percent having 600 or less enrollment actually increasing over the 20 years.

3. Increased efforts were made by the middle schools to provide better connections—articulation—with the elementary and high schools.

4. Comparison of the reasons given for establishment of the new schools reveal the increased use over the years of arguments for their development to serve better the preadolescent/early adolescent age group rather than primarily for administrative expediency.

5. The involvement in, and support and intensity of advance planning for the opening of new middle schools increased very significantly over the 20 years.

6. Universal emphasis on the basic subjects of language arts, math, science and social studies was continued by maintaining these subjects on a fully required basis throughout the middle school grades.

7. The middle schools have moved well toward their function of providing earlier and more fully a wide range of interest-exploring and interest-developing courses and activities shown and commented upon in the appropriate sections above.

8. Several newer exploratory courses and activities reflect quite well developments in society and education: Careers (general and specific courses), computer use, health, sex education, student council and other student participation opportunities.

9. Considerable increases occurred in the percent of schools utilizing an interdisciplinary team organization at each grade level, 5 through 8, from 1968 to 1988. Although there were slight variations in 1988, the four-subject teaming (language arts, math, science and social studies) predominated, as generally recommended.

10. Plans for grouping students for instruction in basic areas tended to give more attention in 1988 than 1968 to academic performance and teachers' judgments than to I.Q. tests, with infrequent use of selective factors, other than student interests, continuing in elective subjects, activities and advisory groups.

11. The use of independent study plans definitely increased in all middle school years from 1968 to 1988—not to majorities of schools providing these but to much higher percents, as for example, providing some students individually planned programs with scheduled time for independent study in grade 5, 0 to 17 percent; grade 6, 1 to 20 percent; grade 7, 6 to 20 percent; and grade 8, 5 to 22 percent.

12. Another of the usual earmarks in middle school models, a teacher advisory plan ("home base," "advisor/advisee," etc.), is being widely used, with 39 percent of the middle schools responding, stating that they had such an advisory program. There is considerable variation in the frequency and length of advisory periods.

13. Middle school personnel in general can apparently take pride in the attitudes they reported selected groups had toward their middle schools—little change from 1968 to 1988, but the percents reporting favorable attitudes were high in both surveys.

14. Evaluation of middle schools has apparently become much more common and better done in the past 20 years.

15. The types of problems encountered in establishing the new organizations, that were suggested in answer to an open-ended question in both surveys reflected the larger number of schools and the complexities of recognization in 1988. The write-ins also indicated much agreement on the same problems we and other observers have noted; surely with the problems so clearly identified, continued progress toward their solution may be expected.

Evidence of Lack of Progress. These points are our notes of hoped for earmarks which the new school organizations generally failed to exhibit during the past 20 years:

1. Little movement toward establishment of special housing arrangements, such as little schools, could be identified.

2. Although there were some increases since 1968 in the percents of schools involving teachers and parents in determining grade organization of the new schools, still only 50 percent of the schools reported in the 1988 survey the involvement of teachers and only 40 percent that of parents.

3. The great importance of students' physical development in pre- and early adolescence is not fully reflected in the failure of some schools to provide physical education on a daily basis throughout the middle school years. And we consider this lack of appropriate physical development activities to be suggested also by the growth in the percent of schools providing Interschool Sports for both boys and girls, with especially large increases in the percents for girls, from 1968 to 1988.

4. A basic emphasis on providing middle school students opportunities for exploring their interests in a wide variety of exploratory courses and activities is shown in many areas, but not in art and foreign languages, both of which lost ground from 1968 to 1988 (perhaps because of the newer, competing electives).

5. Despite the very significant increases in the use of interdisciplinary team teaching from 1968 to 1988, there was also some smaller increase in use of the departmental plan in grades 5 and 6, probably as a substitute for the traditional elementary school plan, the self-contained classroom.

6. Although numerous schools were using other innovative scheduling plans, the use of the traditional secondary school's daily uniform periods, seemed as common in middle schools in 1988 as 1968.

7. Despite the various innovative ways of reporting student progress indicated by individual write-ins, the primary method remained the A-B-C, etc., letter scale in 1988.

8. The most negative, but not surprising, bit of data in the 1988 survey is that regarding the percent of schools reporting specific preparation of their faculties for middle level teaching—61 percent of the middle schools stated that less than 25 percent of their faculties had such preparation, and only 9 percent that more than 75 percent had this!

The fact that we drew out in this summary 15 points of a positive and 8 of a negative nature is not intended to suggest such a score for the middle school, 1968 to 1988. We see these merely as 15 indicators of progress, not completed but moving ahead well, and 8 indicators of goals to be attacked more vigorously. All are new benchmarks we hope to *look back on* soon.

III
Characteristics of Middle Level Schools According to Grade Organizations

We turn now to a comparison by grade organization of middle level schools, a term becoming widely used to include all schools that are preceded by elementary and followed by secondary ones. There are four relatively large grade organizations (see Table 1) meeting this definition—grades 5-8, 6-8, 7-8 and 7-9—for which we have separated the data from the 1988 survey. From these data we report here on differences between these organizations as to various characteristics included in the survey. Table 1 also shows that there were 573 schools of assorted grade groupings in the "Other" classification—only about 5 percent of the total sample. We did not consider this category significant enough to include it in the analysis and presentation of the data that follow. The few comparisons made of the differences between the total sample and individual grade organizations also disregard the "Other" group.

Enrollments

As shown in Table 26, enrollments tended to be larger in the traditional junior high school, grades 7-9, organization, with only 36 percent of these schools having 600 or less as compared with 65 percent of the middle school organizations, grades 5-8 and 6-8 (see Table 3). The difference was smaller in the number having more than 1,000 enrolled, but the percent of

TABLE 26
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS HAVING CERTAIN ENROLLMENTS, 1988, BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE

Enrollments	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 7 - 8	Grades 7 - 9	Total Sample
1 - 100	1	<1	<1	<1	<1
101 - 200	5	4	5	2	4
201 - 300	20	12	12	8	13
301 - 400	27	11	11	8	13
401 - 500	12	14	15	10	14
501 - 600	11	19	20	8	16
601 - 700	3	13	13	12	11
701 - 800	8	10	9	19	11
801 - 900	5	5	7	12	6
901 - 1000	3	3	3	6	3
1001 - 1100	0	3	1	8	3
1101 - 1200	4	2	1	5	3
1201 - 1300	0	2	1	1	1
Above - 1300	1	1	1	1	1

grades 7-9 schools (15) was slightly larger than the total percents (8) of grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools.

Housing Arrangements

As shown in Table 27, there were only very small differences between the housing arrangements of the various grade organizations. Although it is regrettable that some 14 percent of the total had less desirable arrangements for getting teams or other divisions together than being in one plant (all grades), 79 percent, or having the school-within-a-school plan, 7 percent, each plan was somewhat equally used in the different organizations.

TABLE 27
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, HAVING VARIOUS TYPES OF HOUSING ARRANGMENTS

Types of Housing Arrangements	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
One Plant (all grades)	70	80	81	82	79
School Within a School Each a Separate Area	11	6	7	4	7
Certain Grades in Separate Buildings on Same Campus	11	7	7	5	7
Some Students Housed On Another Campus	3	3	1	4	2
Housed in Plant with Lower and/or Higher Grades	5	4	5	4	5

Means of Articulation

The percents of schools using the various means of articulation (see Table 5) varied so little by grade organization that we are not including another table here. Again, as for the grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools, some interesting additional means were written in the survey of responses from the grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools: "joint music concerts, juggling events;" "9th grade orientation at the beginning of the school year," (grades 7-8 school); "one-on-one registration conference;" "student/parent counselor conferences;" "peer teaching activities at other school;" "summer orientation sessions with parents;" "newspaper releases."

Dates of Establishment

As the newcomer in grade organization, the middle school types, grades 5-8 and 6-8, were much newer than the grades 7-8 and 7-9 ones: Table 28 shows that only 7 percent and 5 percent, respectively, of the former had been established before 1963 as compared with 29 and 42 percent of the latter group. The difference is particularly sharp in the 1980's with 35 percent of grades 6-8 schools being established in this period as contrasted with a mere 4 percent of the grades 7-9 ones.

TABLE 28
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, HAVING CERTAIN DATES OF ESTABLISHMENT

Years	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Before 1955	4	2	10	20	7
1956 - 1962	3	3	19	22	10
1963 - 1971	30	25	24	29	26
1972 - 1979	43	35	20	25	31
1980 - 1987	20	35	26	4	26

Reasons for Establishment

Table 29 shows only a very few differences sizable enough to warrant comment. The grade differences themselves account for the low numbers checking as reasons for the establishment of the schools: "Move grade 9" (grades 7-9); "more specialization in grades 5-6" (grades 7-8 and 7-9); "remedy weaknesses of junior high" (grades 7-9). In view of the expediency factor operating in the early junior high school movement it is not suprising that a relatively large 37 percent of the grades 7-9 schools reported as a reason for their establishment, "use older building when the senior high school built;" but it is more surprising that only 36 percent of the grades 7-9 respondents as contrasted with 54 percent of the grades 6-8 ones checked as a reason "Bridge elementary/high school." Actually this transitional school function has been very prominent in the literature as a reason for both types of middle level schools, many middle school proponents having argued that the new school is needed because of the junior

high's inadequacy in this regard. To be noted, too, is the larger percent (67) of grades 6-8 respondents checking the reason, "Provide program specifically designed for age group," as compared with the grades 7-9 lower percent, 51.

TABLE 29
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, REPORTING VARIOUS REASONS FOR THEIR ESTABLISHMENT

Reasons	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Remedy Weaknesses of Two-Level Organization	18	16	18	20	18
Move Grade 9 into High School	19	34	34	7	27
More Specialization in Grades 5 and/or 6	23	13	0	2	11
Bridge Elementary/ High School	46	54	43	36	47
Remedy Weaknesses of Junior High School	19	34	22	9	24
Aid Desegregation	3	7	3	11	7
Eliminate Crowded Conditions	57	45	40	49	47
Provide Program Specifically Designed for Age Group	59	67	57	51	61
Utilize a New Building	24	15	21	24	20
Try Out Various Innovations	15	23	14	13	18
Use Plans Successful Elsewhere	10	16	17	16	15
Use Older Building When Senior High Built	24	13	13	37	19

Nearly all of the write-ins for grades 7-8 and 7-9 units, as for grades 5-8 and 6-8 ones (see pages 13-14), were for reasons of expediency, for example: "To justify building a new gym and dressing room;" "consolidation;" "reduction in enrollment, closing an elementary school" (grades 7-8); "district system for 31 years (6-3-3);" "junior high school was more acceptable to voters than new high school;" "9th grade was removed from the high school;" and "reorganization of district."

Persons Involved in Grade Organization Decision

The data in Table 30 indicate only two differences of interest here. For one, the percent of schools whose principals are reported as having been involved in the organizational decisions is substantially higher for the grades 5-8 and 6-8 ones than for the grades 7-8 and 7-9 ones. Similarly, the percents of teachers reported as involved in the former is higher than for the latter types. Apparently, the decision to turn to a middle school organization has had more teacher and principal involvement than that to turn to the grades 7-8 and 7-9 ones. Parents also were reported as involved by slightly more schools of the middle level organization than the other, with correspondingly small differences indicated for more involvement of system-level administrators and state departments of education. The write-ins reported various additional community groups as being involved. The movement away from external influences on decision-making is slight, but certainly welcomed by middle level educators.

TABLE 30
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, REPORTING CERTAIN PERSONS INVOLVED IN DETERMINING GRADE ORGANIZATION

Persons Involved	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Principal(s)	78	71	56	55	65
Teachers	55	50	37	35	45
System-level Administration	91	89	89	96	90
Accreditation Bodies	6	4	1	7	4
State Department of Education	14	6	8	15	9
Outside Agency	5	4	3	5	4
Parents	39	42	32	34	37

Preparatory Activities for Opening the New School Units

Our analysis of the data regarding the utilization of various preparatory activities revealed too little differences between the organizational types to justify a table. Only one difference of more than 10 percent was revealed: "Visitation of schools with similar plans in operation," grades 5-8, 76 percent; 6-8, 74 percent; 7-8, 59 percent; and grades 7-9, 54 percent. The relative

novelty of the first two, middle school, types undoubtedly contributed to the greater interest in visiting schools elsewhere.

Write-ins on this question by the grades 7-8 and 7-9 schools (see pages 14-15 for grades 5-8 and 6-8) tended to be further explanation of the reasons and procedures for opening, although there were also mentions of such activities as "workshop for principals;" "planning committee;" "inservice meetings of prospective faculty members prior to a complete reorganization of our secondary schools;" "long term planning by parents, teachers, administrators, board members," and the caustic comment, "very little staff involvement."

Required Subjects for All Students

Table 31 shows the universality of language arts and mathematics as year-long required subjects through grade 9, but somewhat less than that in physical education, science and social studies. Science begins a slight drop in grades 7-8 and 7-9 ones, reflecting the use of one-semester, alternative days, and 9th grade elective status in some schools. The social studies percent is below 90 only in grades 7-9 schools, again reflecting its elective status in a few schools. As noted earlier in connection with the 1968/1988 comparisons, physical education requirements dropped to 80 percent of the grades 6-8 ones, and to 70 percent of the grades 7-9 ones. This situation is one about which opinions do differ, perhaps due to pressure for more time for the academic work that both middle school and secondary school educators consider essential.

TABLE 31
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, REPORTING CERTAIN SUBJECTS TAKEN ALL YEAR BY ALL STUDENTS

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 7 - 8	Grades 7 - 9	Total Sample
Language Arts	99	99	97	99	99
Mathematics	99	100	98	100	99
Physical Education	95	80	74	70	79
Science	99	94	87	81	91
Social Studies	98	96	94	89	95

Traditional Exploratory Subjects

Earlier we classified certain exploratory subjects first introduced in the junior high schools as "traditional," and others as "newer," and still other interest development and exploration activities as "other curriculum opportunities" to facilitate the comparison by survey dates, and now continue this classification to compare by grade organizations.

Undoubtedly, because of the competition of the newer courses and other curriculum opportunities, the traditional courses in general were not universally offered (see Tables 32, 33, 34) in grades 6 through 8. But most of these had some offering in grade 5, or 9 also in the organizations which include these grades. Foreign language was offered by sizable percents, especially in grades 7-8 and 7-9 schools, as an elective in grades 7 and especially 8. The percent offering art as a

TABLE 32
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN TRADITIONAL EXPLORATORY COURSES, GRADE 6

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey		
	Grades 5 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Total Sample
Art			
Required	67	63	66
Elective	9	22	17
Foreign Language			
Required	1	8	6
Elective	5	12	10
Home Economics			
Required	25	34	32
Elective	9	10	9
Industrial Arts			
Required	27	36	33
Elective	7	10	8
Music			
Required	62	49	53
Elective	7	17	15
Reading			
Required	80	85	84
Elective	2	1	1

required subject for grade 6 (and 7) was high in grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools, but it becomes much more popular as an elective in grade 8 in the other grade organizations. Home economics was less frequently offered as an elective for grade 8 in grades 5-8 schools. Music was more frequently required in grade 6 and 7 than 8 in all organizations, with its relatively low elective offering probably explained by the offering of several other elective music courses (orchestra, band, especially). Reading was more frequently required (by over 80 percent of the schools having grade 6) in grades 6 and 7 also, but less in grades 7-9 schools, with a high number (54 percent) offering it as an eighth grade elective only in grades 6-8 schools. The chief conclusion we draw from these comparisons is that there are few consistent differences between the different grade organizations as to the offering of these traditional exploratory subjects, although their required status tends to be greater in the middle school organizations.

TABLE 33
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN TRADITIONAL EXPLORATORY COURSES, GRADE 7

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Art					
Required	59	46	43	43	48
Elective	28	41	38	41	37
Foreign Language					
Required	6	10	7	11	9
Elective	20	29	37	32	29
Home Economics					
Required	38	36	34	26	34
Elective	27	33	38	28	32
Industrial Arts					
Required	38	38	34	29	36
Elective	27	32	35	27	30
Music					
Required	43	31	36	35	36
Elective	16	20	18	27	20
Reading					
Required	80	70	67	50	63
Elective	7	5	7	21	8

TABLE 34
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN TRADITIONAL EXPLORATORY COURSES, GRADE 8

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Art					
Required	49	34	24	31	34
Elective	33	52	58	56	51
Foreign Language					
Required	6	8	7	11	8
Elective	33	42	52	50	43
Home Economics					
Required	35	30	17	26	27
Elective	38	47	57	43	47
Industrial Arts					
Required	38	29	20	30	28
Elective	41	47	56	45	47
Music					
Required	31	21	19	23	23
Elective	17	21	19	24	20
Reading					
Required	63	58	54	33	54
Elective	9	10	11	29	13

Certain Newer Exploratory Subjects

Again focusing only on grades (6,7,8) found in more than one of the four grade organizations, we note from Tables 35-37 that Computers, Health, and Sex Education are the most common offerings of the newer exploratory subjects. These (and Careers) were also identified in the earlier section on the 20-year comparisons, as subjects having experienced the most growth. As to comparisons by grades, Creative Writing rivaled Sex Education in popularity in grade 6, where both were usually required. Health was the most popular offering in all three grades followed by Computers and this very closely by Sex Education. Electives in all these newer subjects were less common in grade 6 of either grades 5-8 or 6-8 schools than in grades 7-8 and grades 7-9 schools, with more schools offering a few subjects more frequently as electives than required in grade 8 (and,

TABLE 35
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN NEWER EXPLORATORY SUBJECTS AS REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE, GRADE 6

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey		
	Grades 5 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Total Sample
Agriculture			
Required	0	1	1
Elective	0	0	0
Careers			
Required	6	6	1
Elective	4	4	50
Computers			
Required	37	38	40
Elective	9	11	10
Creative Writing			
Required	22	23	24
Elective	5	3	3
Health			
Required	53	59	62
Elective	2	1	1
Journalism			
Required	0	1	1
Elective	5	3	4
Sex Education			
Required	22	23	24
Elective	5	3	4

TABLE 36
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN NEWER EXPLORATORY SUBJECTS AS REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE, GRADE 7

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 7 - 8	Grades 7 - 9	Total Sample
Agriculture					
Required	0	1	<1	<1	<1
Elective	1	0	3	1	2
Careers					
Required	15	9	10	9	10
Elective	6	7	6	8	7
Computers					
Required	43	40	32	20	35
Elective	23	19	25	21	21
Creative Writing					
Required	31	23	15	13	21
Elective	10	5	9	8	7
Health					
Required	65	58	58	57	60
Elective	4	3	5	3	3
Journalism					
Required	0	1	1	0	1
Elective	12	11	13	8	11
Sex Education					
Required	35	27	25	16	26
Elective	4	5	1	2	3

not shown in the tables, grade 9 having on an almost completely elective status Agriculture and Journalism). The percent of schools offering any of these courses as required subjects tended to be the highest in the grades 5-8 schools. Many other courses were listed by one or more schools in the "Others" write-in sections, especially for the grades 6-8 and 7-8 schools.

Other Curriculum Opportunities

Tables 38-40 show the relative percents of schools offering the various clubs and activities we group as "Other Curriculum Opportunities." With only a few exceptions, those for each grade are offered somewhat equally by the different organizations. But for grade 6, "school parties" are more common in grades 5-8 than grades 6-8 schools and the total sample, with "Social Dancing" less common; all of the other opportunities are less common in grades 5-8 than other schools, except Interschool Sports (both boys and girls) and Photography. All of the opportunities are also slightly less common in grades 5-8 schools for grade 7 except Interschool Sports (both boys and girls), Photography, School Parties, Social Dancing, and for grade 8 in Arts and Crafts, Honor Society, Intramural Sports, Photograhy, Publications, and Student Council (except grades 6-8 schools with 1 percent less than 5-8 ones). Differences between the other organizations as to the provision of these curriculum opportunities are small and

TABLE 37
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN NEWER EXPLORATORY SUBJECTS AS REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE, GRADE 6

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Agriculture					
Required	0	1	0	2	1
Elective	4	2	5	4	4
Careers					
Required	17	12	11	12	12
Elective	11	10	9	12	10
Computers					
Required	41	37	21	24	32
Elective	31	25	45	26	30
Creative Writing					
Required	31	24	14	14	22
Elective	14	6	13	7	9
Health					
Required	64	57	52	52	56
Elective	6	3	5	2	4
Journalism					
Required	0	1	1	0	1
Elective	11	19	26	20	19
Sex Education					
Required	35	26	24	13	24
Elective	5	5	1	4	4

TABLE 38
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN OTHER CURRICULUM OPPORTUNITIES, GRADE 6

Activity	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Total Sample
Arts and Crafts	32	38	36
Honor Society	19	20	20
Intramural Sports (Boys)	61	69	68
Intramural Sports (Girls)	61	68	67
Interschool Sports (Boys)	27	30	29
Interschool Sports (Girls)	26	30	28
Photography	10	11	10
Publications	31	38	36
School Parties	73	56	60
Social Dancing	31	55	48
Student Council	80	83	81

more frequently required in grade 6 and 7 than 8 in all follow no common pattern. Again a wide variety of opportunities were mentioned in the write-in forms from individual schools within all organizations.

Plans of Instructional Organization

Tables 41-43 (we have too little basis for comparison of the grades 5 and 9 data to include these) present the data as to the plan of instructional organization used for the basic subjects of language arts, math, science and social studies, in the various grade organizations. The following observations are noted:

1. Grade 6 instructional organization of these subjects differs very little between grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools, but the departmentalization plan of high schools is more common for grade 7 and grade 8 in grades 5-8 than grades 6-8 schools.

2. Departmentalization is the characteristic plan (found in over 80 percent) for the grades 7-9 schools (the traditional junior high school organization), and is also found in a considerable majority of the grades 7-8 schools.

3. Interdisciplinary team organization, very rare in 1968 as noted earlier, was found for grades 6,7 and 8 (and 5, but not 9), in from 25 to 40 percent of the grades 6-8 schools, and from 20 to 40 percent of the grades 7-8 schools, the actual percent varying by subject. For grade 7, the range is only 15 to 19 percent in grades 5-8 schools, and 11 to 18 percent in 7-9 ones; for grade 8, 14-17 percent in grades 5-8, and only 9-14 percent in grades 7-9 ones. Clearly, the grades 6-8 schools have made most progress here.

4. The self-contained classroom organization, long associated with the elementary schools, was found in more than 12 percent of the schools only in the grades 5-8 organization for grade 5 (over 36 to 38 percent) and grade 6 (17 to 20 percent), and in the grades 6-8 organization for grade 6 (14 to 18 percent). Language

TABLE 39
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN OTHER CURRICULUM OPPORTUNITIES, GRADE 7

Activity	Grades 5 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 7 - 8	Grades 7 - 9	Total Sample
Arts and Crafts	35	38	46	42	40
Honor Society	27	39	41	32	37
Intramural Sports (Boys)	57	69	63	59	64
Intramural Sports (Girls)	58	68	62	60	64
Interschool Sports (Boys)	82	72	75	79	75
Interschool Sports (Girls)	80	72	75	80	75
Photography	16	15	16	16	16
Publications	43	50	49	45	48
School Parties	65	55	60	58	59
Social Dancing	72	66	68	67	67

TABLE 40
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, OFFERING CERTAIN OTHER CURRICULUM OPPORTUNITIES, GRADE 8

Activity	Grades 5 - 8	Grades 6 - 8	Grades 7 - 8	Grades 7 - 9	Total Sample
Arts and Crafts	36	39	49	41	40
Honor Society	30	41	44	51	42
Intramural Sports (Boys)	56	66	63	57	62
Intramural Sports (Girls)	57	66	63	58	62
Interschool Sports (Boys)	83	77	76	83	79
Interschool Sports (Girls)	82	75	76	84	78
Photography	19	21	24	21	21
Publications	44	62	67	58	60
School Parties	67	57	60	58	60
Social Dancing	77	69	68	67	69
Student Council	90	89	91	93	89

arts was the only subject area in grade 9 that was offered in a self-contained classroom 10 percent or more of the time.

Criteria for Grouping Students

Tables 44-46 show by grade organization the percents of schools using certain criteria in each grade, 6 through 8 (tables not presented for grades 5 and 9 since each only included in one grade organization), for grouping students for each of three purposes: (1) instruction in basic subjects; (2) instruction in elective subjects; and (3) for advisory programs. The following notes summarize the comparisons.

1. Intelligence Quotient Tests were used in less than 10 percent for instruction in elective subjects and for advisory programs in grades 6, 7 and 8 (also grade 5 for both purposes, and grade 9 for advisory programs with 11 percent, elective subjects) in each of the grade organizations. This criterion was used in slightly more than 25 percent of the schools for grouping in basic subjects, with very little difference between grade organizations.

2. The use of achievement tests, teacher recommendations and previous academic records was about the same (2/3 or so) for grouping in basic subjects in each grade, in all four school organizations. But for grouping in elective subjects and for advisory programs the use of the selective criteria (achievement tests, teacher recommendations and previous academic record) sharply decreased, and the use of random assignment sharply increased for all grades.

TABLE 41
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, UTILIZING CERTAIN PLANS* FOR ORGANIZING INSTRUCTION IN BASIC SUBJECTS, GRADE 6

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey								
	Grades 5 - 8			Grades 6 - 8			Total Sample		
	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC
Language Arts	38	41	17	41	46	18	40	45	19
Mathematics	35	44	17	38	50	14	37	48	16
Science	35	42	20	37	50	14	37	47	16
Social Studies	33	43	20	39	47	15	37	46	17

*IT=Interdisciplinary Team SC=Self-Contained Classroom D=Departmentalization

TABLE 42
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, UTILIZING CERTAIN PLANS* FOR ORGANIZING INSTRUCTION IN BASIC SUBJECTS, GRADE 7

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey														
	Grades 5 - 8			Grades 6 - 8			Grades 7 - 8			Grades 7 - 9			Total Sample		
	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC
Language Arts	19	80	3	35	60	7	30	68	8	18	83	9	29	70	7
Mathematics	16	83	3	30	67	6	22	76	7	11	84	9	24	74	6
Science	15	85	3	29	67	5	23	75	5	11	84	9	23	74	5
Social Studies	15	85	3	32	63	5	26	72	6	15	83	9	26	72	6

*IT= Interdisciplinary Team SC=Self-Contained Classroom D=Departmentalization

TABLE 43
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, UTILIZING CERTAIN PLANS* FOR ORGANIZING INSTRUCTION IN BASIC SUBJECTS, GRADE 8

Subjects	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey														
	Grades 5 - 8			Grades 6 - 8			Grades 7 - 8			Grades 7 - 9			Total Sample		
	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC	IT	D	SC
Language Arts	17	82	3	29	67	6	27	71	9	14	87	9	24	73	7
Mathematics	15	84	3	25	72	5	20	78	8	9	87	9	20	78	6
Science	14	86	3	24	72	5	21	76	6	9	87	9	20	78	6
Social Studies	14	86	3	26	68	5	25	73	7	11	87	9	22	75	6

*IT=Interdisciplinary Team SC=Self-Contained Classroom D=Departmentalization

3. There were differences to note between the use of criteria for grouping in elective subjects and advisory programs: random assignment was used more widely in grades 6-8 than grades 7-9 schools for grouping in basic subjects (grade 7, 54 and 42 percent, respectively; grade 8, 54 and 44 percent, respectively); previous academic records were used more for grouping in elective subjects in grades 7-9 schools than grades 6-8 ones (grade 7, 30 and 13 percent, respectively and grade 8, 34 and 14 percent, respectively). As to advisory programs, random assignment was used more widely in grades 5-8 schools (46 percent, grade 5 and grade 6) than in grades 6-8 ones (34 percent, grade 6) and in grades 6-8 ones (grade 7, 35 percent and grade 8, 35 percent) than in grades 7-9 ones (grade 7, 42 percent, and grade 8, 44 percent).

Scheduling for Instruction

Table 47 shows the continued reliance on uniform daily periods especially in grades 7, 8 and 9 in middle level schools. Earlier sections commented on the growth of interdisciplincary team organizations in middle schools but here we note less use of this plan's most appropriate scheduling arrangement—flexible scheduling within blocks of time—than would seem to follow. However, we can note its use in more than a fourth of grades 5 and 6. Although we also found less use of departmentalization than of uniform daily periods, the usual accompaniment, it is entirely possible that some respondents checked both daily uniform periods and blocks of time since 3 or 4 periods may be blocked for interdisciplinary team plans, with

the block broken down flexibly into time periods. It is to be noted that grades 7-8 and 7-9 schools have the highest percent of schools using daily uniform schedules and the least having other plans with the surprising exception of self-contained classroom schedules we cannot fully explain (although it is probable that special education at this level is one reason).

Independent Study Opportunities

As noted in an earlier section, the growth of independent study opportunities in the new middle school organizations (grades 5-8 and 6-8) after 1968 reflects well the goal of individualization held for these schools. Table 48 shows that the provision of these opportunities varies little now between the different grade organizations. There is not much progression of opportunities from grade to grade; for example, the percent of students having individually planned programs with time scheduled for independent study was reported for 17 percent out of the grade 5 sample, 20 percent of grade 6, 12 percent of grade 7, 20 percent of grade 8 and grade 9. The usual theory of independent study is that its use should increase with age and grade level, although observation of high school and college instruction may deny application of the theory.

Reports of Student Progress

The facts noted below from Table 49 indicate the relatively few distinct differences between the grade organizations as to the types of reports used. But first we call attention to the fact that the traditional A-B-C, etc., letter scale has not only persisted for the last 20 years, as we noted earlier, but it remains the most used system in all grade organizations. As to differences:

1. Certain types are more common in grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools than in grades 7-8 and 7-9 ones: Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory, Informal Written Notes, and Regular Parent Conferences. Many educators regard the notes and conferences as more significant means of building parent cooperation than the letter grades (both A-B-C and S-U). However, the grades 7-8 and grades 7-9 schools' write-ins included several mentions of written progress (mid-term, 3-weeks, and even weekly and daily) reports.

2. The dual system (one mark for attainment in comparison with a group standard, another in comparison with the student's own ability) and various types of self-evaluation devices have obviously not become popular at the middle level. The focus on the student needs intended at this level is not reflected in the reporting system!

Teacher Advisory Plans

Little difference was found in the number of schools by grade organization replying "Yes" to the question (No. 17): "Do you have a home base or advisory (A/A) plan?" The percents were as follows: Grades 5-8, 41; grades 6-8, 39; grades 7-8, 37; grades 7-9, 38; total sample 258, 39. Some differences were found (see Table 50) in the percent of schools by grade organizations using certain persons for counseling

TABLE 44
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1968, GROUPING STUDENTS IN BASIC SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO CERTAIN CRITERIA, IN GRADES 6, 7 AND 8

Type of Scheduling	Grade	Percent of Schools in 1968 Survey				
		Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Intelligence Quotient	6	27	27			27
	7	27	28	27	31	28
	8	27	27	25	31	27
Achievement Tests	6	65	68			66
	7	68	70	71	72	69
	8	68	68	70	72	68
Teacher Recommendations	6	69	76			75
	7	70	79	74	77	76
	8	70	78	74	77	75
Age (Number of Years in School)	6	21	22			22
	7	21	21	19	17	20
	8	21	22	20	17	21
Previous Academic Record	6	58	61			60
	7	61	65	74	69	67
	8	61	64	74	69	66
Random Assignment	6	25	25			25
	7	26	24	27	26	26
	8	26	25	27	26	26

TABLE 45
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, GROUPING STUDENTS IN ELECTIVE SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO CERTAIN CRITERIA, GRADES 6, 7 AND 8

Type of Scheduling	Grade	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
		Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Intelligence Quotient	6	6	3			4
	7	6	4	8	10	6
	8	7	4	8	10	7
Achievement Tests	6	11	8			10
	7	11	9	16	20	13
	8	15	10	17	21	14
Teacher Recommendations	6	22	21			22
	7	26	22	29	31	25
	8	28	25	29	34	28
Age (Number of Years in School)	6	6	8			7
	7	7	8	12	8	9
	8	6	8	13	8	9
Previous Academic Record	6	16	12			13
	7	17	13	23	33	20
	8	21	14	23	34	20
Random Assignment	6	41	50			47
	7	47	54	49	42	50
	8	47	54	49	44	50

students and in the frequency (Table 51) and length (Table 52) of advisory periods, as noted below.

1. The percent of grades 5-8 (56) and 6-8 (44) schools using home base teachers in counseling was distinctly higher than in the grades 7-8 (34 percent) and 7-9 (29 percent) ones, indicating more use of the home-base teacher advisory system in the middle school organization.

2. The decline in the use of part-time and increase in that of full-time counselors from the grades 5-8 to the grades 7-9 schools is regarded as a reflection of the usual more frequent assignment of full-time counselors to secondary-type schools. This is also indicated by the relative infrequent mention of "Other" persons sharing in counseling in grades 7-9 schools.

3. Daily advisory periods are conducive to the close teacher-student relationship envisioned in the teacher advisory plan, and it is encouraging to see from Table 51 that about 80 percent of all grade organizations with advisory programs have these. The data have not been analyzed to relate frequency and length of period, but many schools have daily periods of 15 or more minutes; Table 52 shows that 64 percent of the grades 5-8 schools have this length period; 63 percent, grades 6-8; 59 percent, grades 7-8; 47 percent, grades 7-9. The related fact that over half of the grades 7-9 schools had less than 16 minute periods (in fact 41 percent had only 10

TABLE 46
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, GROUPING STUDENTS IN ADVISORY PROGRAMS ACCORDING TO CERTAIN CRITERIA, GRADES 6, 7 AND 8

Type of Scheduling	Grade	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
		Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Intelligence Quotient	6	5	5			5
	7	4	5	5	10	6
	8	4	4	6	10	5
Achievement Tests	6	16	13			15
	7	14	11	10	20	13
	8	14	11	11	21	13
Teacher Recommendations	6	25	16			19
	7	21	14	10	31	16
	8	21	14	11	34	16
Age (Number of Years in School)	6	12	11			12
	7	11	10	7	8	10
	8	10	10	7	8	10
Previous Academic Record	6	16	10			13
	7	14	10	9	30	12
	8	14	9	9	34	12
Random Assignment	6	46	34			37
	7	43	35	37	42	33
	8	43	35	36	44	34

minutes or less) is probably a holdover of the administrative homeroom function of the traditional junior high.

Faculty With Special Preparation for Middle Level Education

The alarming fact revealed by Table 53 is that of the relatively small percent of all middle level faculties of whom at least 75 percent have had special preparation for teaching at this level. Only 13 percent of the total sample had such preparation, with only 9 percent of those in grades 6-8 schools, but 25 percent in grades 7-9 schools. Some junior high teachers do, of course, have some special junior high school (frequently a variety of secondary education training) preparation.

Attitudes Toward the Middle Level School Organization

We noted in the section comparing survey results of 1968 and 1988 that the administrators making the report were as biased in one year as another, and now must comment that their bias does not seem to be related to the grade organization (see Table 54) they administer! Actually, our observation is that the majority of students, staff, parents and even the public are usually favorably disposed toward their own schools, and this phenomenon has been commented upon in national opinion polls as well (see 20th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 1988). We do note a lower rating of the public's opinion than other groups, but again without reference to grade organization.

Plans for Evaluation

Our summary in the 1968/1988 middle school comparison section of the plans for evaluation written in by most respondents could be repeated in part for the grade organizations not included in the former: Grades 7-8 and 7-9 schools. The one difference to comment upon was the much more frequent mention in the grades 7-9 forms of the regional accreditation and evaluation requirements. The junior high schools have been accustomed to, and rely much more fully, on these evaluations. However, frequently mentioned along with them were the locally-developed plans more common to the middle school organizations.

TABLE 47
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS USING CERTAIN TYPES OF SCHEDULING FOR INSTRUCTION, BY GRADE, 1988

Type of Scheduling	Grade	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey			
		Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9
Self-Contained Classroom	5	44			
	6	28	20		
	7	7	9	15	16
	8	7	9	16	16
	9				16
Daily Periods – Uniform Length	5	41			
	6	57	74		
	7	82	83	93	93
	8	84	85	93	95
	9				92
Flexible Scheduling	5	26			
	6	31	30		
	7	14	25	13	8
	8	14	21	10	7
	9				6
Daily Periods – Varying Length	5	16			
	6	17	12		
	7	12	11	7	2
	8	12	10	7	2
	9				1

Major Problems in Establishing Middle Level Schools

As the other grade organizations, there was no dearth of problems reported in the establishment of the grades 7-8 and 7-9 schools. Many were similar to those noted in our earlier section on grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools' problems. In addition these quotes are interesting:

Grades 7-8

"Building too small, classes too large"
"Getting and keeping teachers involved"
"Time for team preparation period"
"Too many course offerings; difficulty of having

"Too many course offerings; difficulty of having junior high and senior high in same building"
"Functions as a mini-high school"
"High school transferred staff"
"Teachers with high school certificates"
"Too rigid a schedule"

Grades 7-9

"Too many courses"
"Grades 7-12 in one building"
"High rate of student failures in academic subjects"
"State mandates and schedules"
"Stress on athletics"

TABLE 48
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING CERTAIN TYPES OF INDEPENDENT STUDY OPPORTUNITIES, BY GRADE, 1988

Type of Independent Study Opportunity	Grade	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey			
		Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9
Some students are released part or all of the time from the class(es) for independent study	5	17			
	6	22	25		
	7	20	27	22	27
	8	21	26	25	29
	9				27
One or more groups of students with similar interests work as a seminar	5	9			
	6	11	12		
	7	14	14	11	13
	8	12	14	11	14
	9				14
Some students have individually planned programs with regularly scheduled time for independent study	5	15			
	6	21	18		
	7	19	20	15	17
	8	19	22	16	16
	9				20
Some students have time scheduled for work experience with faculty supervision	5	6			
	6	6	7		
	7	7	8	14	11
	8	10	11	17	12
	9				18

"Lack of expertise re interdisciplinary teaching"
"Non-community reports"

Summary: Differences Between the Grades Organizations

Our 1988 survey revealed that the provision of the following features of middle level organization we studied differed very little between the four major grade organizations: Housing arrangements, means of articulation with the schools above and below, independent study opportunities, attitudes reported regarding the grade organization.

As to the various other items, we noted an especially strong tendency toward similarities between the grades 5-8 and 6-8 organizations. Both of these plans include one or more former grades of the modal K-6 elementary school, and also two grades (7 and 8) more typically considered secondary ones after the establishment of the junior high school. Similarly, the grades 7-8 and 7-9 schools tended to be alike, including as they do only grades above the K-6 elementary ones. For convenience, therefore, we are considering in this section the grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools as middle school, and the grades 7-8 and 7-9 ones as junior high types. The differences are greatest between these two groups on the following items:

TABLE 49
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, USING VARIOUS TYPES OF PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTS, 1988

Types	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Letter Scale	84	85	86	89	86
Word Scale	20	21	18	11	19
Number Scale	16	13	13	9	13
Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory	48	39	30	27	37
Informal Written Notes	57	64	49	51	58
Percentage Marks	31	29	26	30	29
Dual System	12	9	3	10	8
Regular Parent Conferences	77	67	63	55	66
Self Evaluation	7	4	5	5	5

1) The departmentalized plan of instruction is used more in the junior high types, and the interdisciplinary plan used more in the middle school types;

2) Uniform daily periods are used most in the junior high types, and flexible scheduling is used more in the middle school types;

3) The reasons for establishing the school originally were slightly more administrative in the junior high school types, and more program and student related in the middle school ones;

4) Higher percents of teachers and principals were involved in the decision to establish the new organizations of the middle school type;

5) Traditional exploratory subjects tended to be more frequently required in the middle school types than in the grades 7-9 types;

6) More use of random assignment for grouping in basic subjects and advisory programs was found in the middle school types;

7) Foreign languages were offered more frequently as electives by the junior high types;

8) The middle school types, as to be expected, tended to be considerably more recently established.

Certain comparisons also indicated one grade organization as being somewhat clearly different from the other four organizations. Such differences are reported for each of the four organizations below.

Grades 5-8 schools: (1) had the highest percent of students taking physical education, science and social studies throughout the school year; (2) made most use of informal pupil progress reports; (3) made most use of the self-contained classroom organization, but primarily for grades 5 and 6; (4) had most use of grouping by random assignment for grades 6, 7 and 8, for advisory programs; (5) made most use of home base teachers (advisors) and other personnel in counseling.

Grades 6-8 schools: (1) used more visitation of schools with similar plans in operation as a preparatory

TABLE 50
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, UTILIZING CERTAIN PERSONS FOR COUNSELING STUDENTS, 1988

Personnel	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Home Base Teacher	56	44	34	29	41
Other Classroom Teachers	31	31	24	26	30
Part-time Counselors	33	22	19	11	22
Full-time Counselors	63	84	85	92	82

TABLE 51
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, HAVING CERTAIN NUMBER OF ADVISORY PERIODS PER WEEK, 1988

Number of Periods Per Week	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
1	13	10	14	7	10
2	10	8	3	10	10
3	0	4	2	5	3
4	0	1	0	0	1
5	77	78	81	78	78

TABLE 52
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, HAVING CERTAIN LENGTHS OF ADVISORY PERIODS

Number of Minutes	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
1 - 5	8	2	9	3	4
6 - 10	14	21	19	38	22
11 - 15	14	15	14	13	14
16 - 20	24	19	14	15	19
21 - 25	8	13	21	3	12
26 - 30	11	15	7	8	11
31 - 35	5	1	2	0	1
36 - 40	3	5	5	3	4
41 - 45	5	4	2	10	5
46 - 50	5	2	4	3	3
51 - 55	0	1	0	5	1
56 - 60	3	2	0	0	1
More than 60	0	1	4	0	1

activity; (2) made more use of random assignment for grouping in basic subjects than was done in grades 7-9; (3) made most use of interdisciplinary team organization.

Grades 7-8 schools: (1) had the highest percent of newer exploratory subjects as required; (2) had the highest use of uniform daily periods.

Grades 7-9 schools: (1) had the shortest daily advisory periods; (2) tended to have the largest enrollments; (3) had the largest percent of faculty with special preparation for this level; (4) relied more frequently on state and regional evaluation plans.

It has not been the purpose of this report to characterize one organization as "best," "poorest" and so forth. In a brief concluding section, however, we note from the survey findings how the different organizations do and do not exhibit critical elements of a good middle level school.

TABLE 53
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, HAVING FACULTIES WITH VARIOUS EXTENTS OF SPECIAL MIDDLE LEVEL PREPARATION, 1988

Percents	Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
	Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Less than 25%	66	61	57	46	58
25% to 50%	14	16	16	17	17
51% to 75%	9	15	13	12	13
76% to 100%	11	8	15	25	13

TABLE 54
PERCENTS OF MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOLS BY DIFFERENT GRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND TOTAL SAMPLE, 1988, REPORTING CERTAIN ATTITUDES OF SELECTED GROUPS TOWARD THEIR MIDDLE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Types		Percent of Schools in 1988 Survey				
		Grades 5-8	Grades 6-8	Grades 7-8	Grades 7-9	Total Sample
Students	Favorable	91	92	91	88	91
	Indifferent	9	7	8	11	8
	Opposed	0	0	1	1	<1
Staff	Favorable	96	94	95	90	94
	Indifferent	4	5	3	7	5
	Opposed	0	1	1	3	1
Parents	Favorable	94	94	92	91	93
	Indifferent	6	6	8	7	6
	Opposed	0	0	1	2	<1
Public	Favorable	81	80	85	83	81
	Indifferent	19	20	13	15	18
	Opposed	0	0	1	2	<1

IV
A Partial Appraisal of Middle Level Schools, 1988

Our analysis of the characteristics of middle schools as defined in the earlier section comparing our 1968 and 1988 survey data revealed that considerable progress had been made in terms of the relative percents of schools exhibiting various characteristic features or earmarks. The further analysis of the 1988 data in the section that followed as to characteristics of the four major grade groupings revealed some distinct differences among them. We now draw conclusions based on both sets of data in reference to one summary set of "critical elements of a good middle school" (Alexander, 1987). We believe that any good school at the middle level should exhibit these characteristics.

1. An interdisciplinary organization, with a flexibly scheduled day. Considerable increases occurred in the percent of schools using an interdisciplinary team organization from 1968 to 1988 for the four basic areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Still approximately two-thirds of the schools do not use this plan in grades 5 through 8, and substantially less in grade 9. Departmentalization is most common in the grades 7-8 and 7-9 schools. Flexible scheduling is not nearly so common, at least in schoolwide schedules, as interdisciplinary teaming in any of the organizations but was found most frequently in grades 5-8 and 6-8 schools.

2. An adequate guidance program, including a teacher advisory plan. Teacher advisory plans (now usually called "advisor/advisee" or "home base") were too uncommon to include in the 1968 survey, but the question on this in the 1988 one brought a 39 percent affirmative reply as to its existence. In 1988, 77 percent of the schools with teacher advisory plans reported daily advisory group meetings and over half had periods 21 minutes or longer. The junior high type schools had shorter advisory periods and used more full-time counselors; otherwise there was little difference between the schools as to our points of query.

3. A full-scale exploratory program. The exploratory function of the traditional junior high school has been continued well in the newer middle school types. The middle school organizations tend to require minimal participation in several exploratory areas. All of the organizations have responded to major social developments and have in common emphasis in 1988 on careers, computers, health and sex education, plus a wide variety of newer courses, activities and mini-courses.

4. Curriculum provision for such broad goals and curriculum domains as personal development, continued learning skills, and basic knowledge areas. The almost 100 percent requirement of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies (the latter two being less universal) throughout the middle grades provide for the basic knowledge areas. Increased provision of required reading instruction in the middle school years, and the common provision of instruction in computer skills have strengthened the curriculum for continued learining skills. Except for less reading instruction required (but more elective) in grades 7-9 schools, there is little difference between the grade organizations. The entire exploratory program, as well as the guidance provisions noted earlier, and the health and physical education program serve the personal development goals. We regret the less than 100 percent requirement of physical education (80 percent provision in grades 6-8 schools, and 70 percent in grades 7-9 ones).

5. Varied and effective instructional methodology for the age group. It was not possible and not attempted in our survey to get adequate data on this element. We did inquire in both surveys about the provision of independent study opportunities, and have commented fully about their considerable increase from 1968 to 1988. We did note little progression from grade to grade in the provision of independent study, with the 9th grade (grades 7-9 schools, of course) actually having less (27 percent) than the 8th grade (29 percent) of the released time type of independent study, for example.

6. Continued orientation and articulation for students, parents, and teachers. We have noted the increase in certain preparatory activities for opening new middle level organizations that became more common by 1987-88. Little difference between the grade organizations was found.

Some desirable means of connecting (articulation) the middle level schools with those below and above also grew more common from 1968 to 1988, and many new means were reported by the write-in responses. The

various grade organizations tended to use the same means and as widely.

In conclusion the middle level is moving toward becoming a full partner in the new three-level system of education below the college level. Much progress has been made in the implementation of desirable characteristics but many middle level schools (the majority on most characteristics) have yet to provide features they need, and probably wish to have. We suspect that most schools at all levels have a few such gaps between desired and actual characteristics, and hope that such data as reported here for the middle level will help school leaders and supporters to improve education at every level.

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APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY
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MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOL SURVEY, 1987

This survey is being conducted as a follow up of Alexander's pioneer 1967 survey. The purpose is to find out more about the progress, both numerically and programmatically, of middle level schools during these 20 years.

Your school has been selected in a nationwide sample of middle level schools. Your cooperation in completing and returning this form promptly will be greatly appreciated, and you will be sent a copy of the survey report if requested below.

William M. Alexander
Professor Emeritus
University of Florida

C. Kenneth McEwin
Professor
Appalachian State University

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name_____Title_____

2. Name of School_____Current Enrollment_____

3. School Address_____City_____State_____Zip_____

4. School District_____No. Middle Level Schools in District_____

5. Do you wish to be sent a copy of the report of this survey? Yes_____ No_____

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

1. Please indicate by a check the grades included in your school, 1987-88:

   ☐ 5-8 ☐ 6-8 ☐ 7-8 ☐ 7-9 ☐ Other_____

2. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable the housing arrangements for students:

   ☐ One plant (middle level school only)

   ☐ "Schools within a school" plan, each school a separate area

   ☐ Certain grades in separate buildings on the same campus

   ☐ Some students housed in buildings(s) on another campus

   ☐ Housed in a plant with lower and/or higher grades

   ☐ Other (specify)_____

3. Please indicate by a check any of the following means employed by your school to provide articulation between your school and those with lower and higher grades:

- ☐ Joint workshops with teachers in lower and higher grades
- ☐ Joint curriculum planning activities with teachers of higher and/or lower grades
- ☐ Middle school teacher visitation of elementary and/or high schools
- ☐ Sharing faculty with elementary and/or high schools
- ☐ Giving program information to elementary and/or high schools
- ☐ Obtaining or providing data re students entering or leaving your school
- ☐ Student visitation of the high school(s) for orientation
- ☐ Visitation of your school by students from feeder schools
- ☐ Middle school students' visits to feeder schools to acquaint elementary students with your program and facilities
- ☐ Visitation of your school by high school representatives for the purpose of orientation
- ☐ Middle school students taking advanced course work in the high school
- ☐ Other (specify)_____

ESTABLISHMENT OF YOUR SCHOOL

4. Please indicate by a check the year your middle level school was established:

☐ Before 1955 ☐ 1955-62 ☐ 1963-71 ☐ 1972-79 ☐ 1980-87

5. Please indicate by a check, to the best of your knowledge, the reasons for establishing your middle level school: (Check as many as are applicable.)

- ☐ To remedy the weaknesses of the two-level organization (elementary/high school)
- ☐ To move grade 9 into the high school
- ☐ To provide more specialization in grades 5 and/or 6
- ☐ To bridge better the elementary and the high school
- ☐ To remedy the weaknesses of the junior high school
- ☐ To aid desegregation
- ☐ To eliminate crowded conditions in other schools
- ☐ To provide a program specifically designed for children in this age group

☐ To utilize a new school building

☐ To try out various innovations

☐ To use plans that have been successful in other school systems

☐ To utilize an older building when a new senior high school was built

☐ Other (specify)_____

6. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable the person(s) involved in deciding on your grade organization:

☐ Principal(s)
☐ Teachers
☐ System-level administration
☐ Accrediting bodies
☐ State department of education
☐ Survey by an outside agency
☐ Parents
☐ Other (specify)_____

7. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable the activities in which your staff participated prior to opening your present middle level school:

☐ A year or more of full-time faculty study and planning, in your district

☐ A year or more of full-time study by faculty representatives at a university in a program designed specifically to prepare middle level teachers

☐ Representation in a middle level school planning project, specially funded

☐ Summer faculty workshop prior to the opening of the school year

☐ Occasional planning sessions of prospective middle school faculty members

☐ Visitation of schools with similar plans in operation, by representatives of your school

☐ Inservice meetings of prospective faculty members with consultant(s) on middle level school development

☐ Other (specify)_____

_____

CURRICULUM

Common Subjects

8. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable whether each of these subjects is taken by all students in all grades (all year) and explain the situation for each "No":

Subject	Check		Explanation, if "No"
	Yes	No	
Language Arts			
Mathematics			
Physical Education			
Science			
Social Studies			

PLEASE TURN TO NEXT PAGE

Exploratories, Electives, Etc.

9. Please place a "R" in each box to indicate a required course or an "E" to indicate an elective course at each grade level. Also, please indicate the length of time each course is offered:

Course	In What Grades						Length of Course		
	5	6	7	8	9	all	Year	1/2 year	Less than 1/2 year
Agriculture									
Art									
Band									
Careers									
Chorus									
Computers									
Creative Writing									
Foreign Language									
General Music									
Health									
Home Economics									
Industrial Arts									
Journalism									
Orchestra									
Reading									
Sex Education									
Speech									
Typing									
Others:*									

*If your list includes too many others to list here, please just enclose a copy with information noted as to grades as above.

Other Curriculum Opportunities (Elective Activities, Minicourses, etc.)

10. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable in what grades each of the following is offered, if at all, and add any special notes:

	If Offered, In What Grades?						
Activity	5	6	7	8	9	All	Notes
Arts and Crafts							
Honor Society							
Intramural Sports (Boys)							
Intramural Sports (Girls)							
Interschool Sports (Boys)							
Interschool Sports (Girls)							
Photography							
Publications							
School Parties							
Social Dancing							
Student Council							
Others:*							

*If your list includes too many others to list here, please just enclose a copy with information noted as to grades as above.

Grouping for Instruction

12. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable the criteria employed in assigning students to various types of classroom groups at each grade level:

Criteria	Type of Grouping														
	Home base (advisory group)					Instructional groups for basic subjects					Instructional groups in elective offerings				
	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9
I. Q. Tests															
Achievement Tests															
Teacher Recommendations															
Age (i.e., no. years in school)															
Previous Academic Record															
Random Assignment															

Instructional Schedule

13. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable the type(s) of daily scheduling utilized in your school at each grade level

Type of Schedule	5	6	7	8	9
Self-contained classrooms					
Daily periods uniform in length					
Flexible scheduling within blocks for teams					
Daily periods of varying length					
Other plan (describe)					

Instructional Organization

11. Please write in the grade(s) in which each instructional plan is followed for the subjects listed:

	In what grade(s) (write in) is the plan followed for each subject?				
Instructional Plan	Lang. Arts	Math	Science	Soc. St.	Others (write in subject and grade)
Interdisciplinary Team-- (2 or more teachers working together with same students in 2 or more of these subjects)					
Departmental-- (different class and teacher each subject)					
Self-contained Classroom-- (one teacher for all the basic subjects)					
Other plan-- Explain:_____ _____					

Special Notes: _____

_____

_____

Independent Study

14. Please indicate by grades, any subject(s) in which opportunities are provided for some students to work independently of a class:

Type of Independent Study	Write in, by grades, any subject(s) in which used				
	5	6	7	8	9
Some students are released part or all of the time from the class(es) for independent study					
One or more groups of students with similar interests work as a seminar					
Some students have individually-planned programs with regularly scheduled time for independent study					
Some students have time scheduled for work experience with faculty supervision					

Reporting Pupil Progress

15. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable the system(s) your school uses for reporting pupil progress to parents:

☐ Letter scale (A to E, etc.)

☐ Word scale (Excellent, good, etc.)

☐ Number scale (1-5, etc.)

☐ Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory scale (S,U; E, S, U; Pass-Fail, Etc.)

☐ Informal written notes

☐ Percentage marks (92, 80, etc.)

☐ Dual system (progress compared (1) with the class and (2) with student's own potential)

☐ Regularly-scheduled parent conferences

☐ Self-evaluation

☐ Other (specify) _____

Is there a distinction between the system of reporting pupil progress in academic and exploratory courses?

☐Yes ☐No If yes, please explain:_____

16. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable the persons in your school who are assigned the responsibility for counseling students:

☐Home base teacher (advisor) ☐Full-time counselors

☐Other classroom teachers ☐Other (specify)

☐Part-time counselors _____

17. Do you have a home base or advisory (A/A) plan? ____Yes ____No. If yes, please supply this information:

(1) Do all teachers serve as home base teachers or advisors?

Notes re exceptions:

Yes ____ _____

No ____ _____

(2) Which, if any, staff members other than teachers also serve as advisors?

_____

(3) How many times per week do the home base or advisory groups meet?

Daily _____ If not, how many times per week? _____

(4) How many minutes per session does the home base or advisory group meet?___

18. Please check the approximate percent of your faculty who have had specific university or college preparation for middle level teaching:

☐less than 25% ☐25 to 50% ☐51 to 75% ☐76 to 100%

SCHOOL EVALUATION

19. Please indicate by as many checks as applicable your estimate of the attitude of each of the following groups toward your middle school organization:

Group	Estimate of Group's Attitude			Notes
	Favorable	Indifferent	Opposed	
Students				
Staff				
Parents				
Public				

Please describe any plan you have for evaluating your school, enclosing any available illustrative materials:

Please list any major problems you have encountered in establishing your middle level school:

Other Comments: